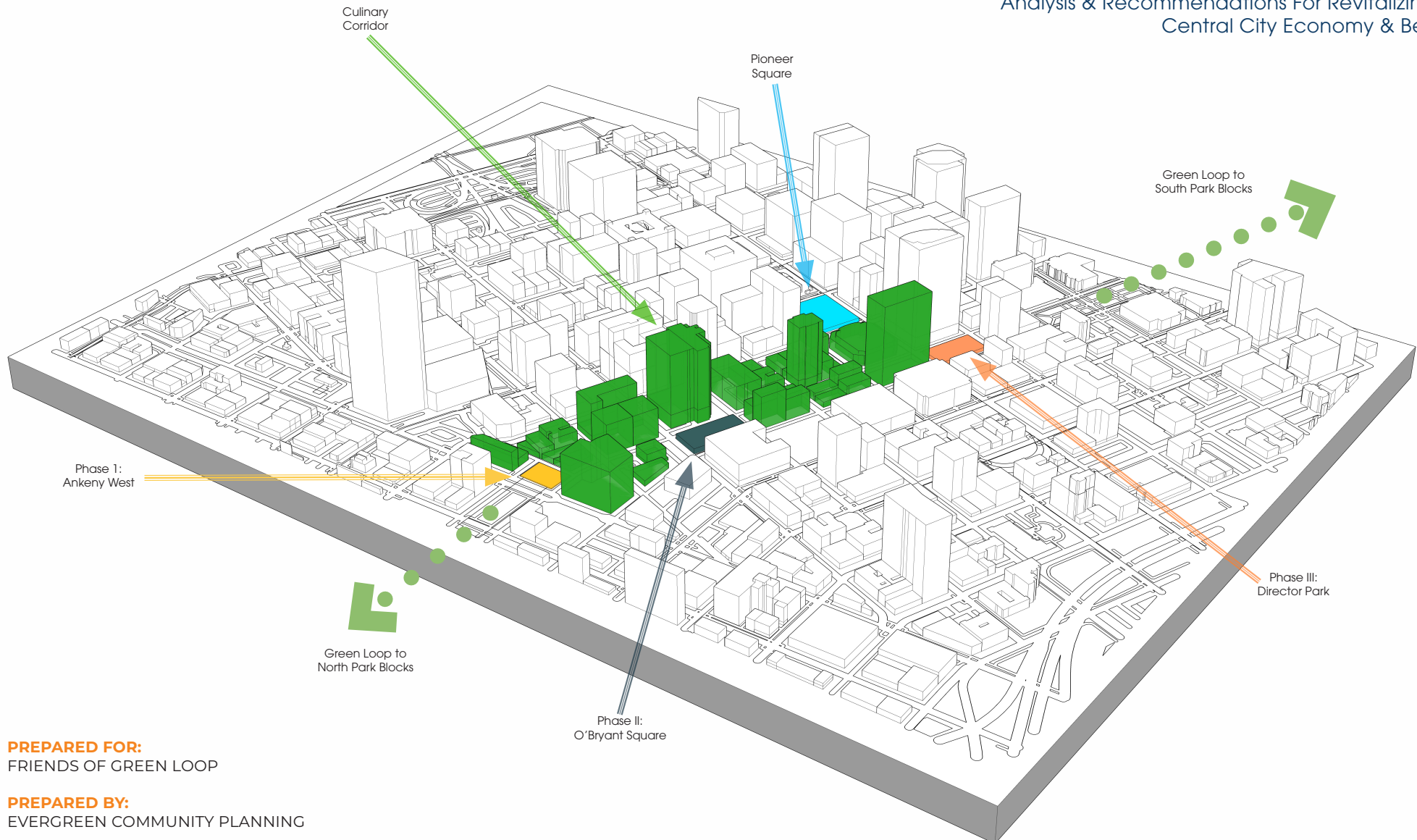


# FOOD CARTOLOGY 2021: RECOVERY IN CENTRAL CITY

Analysis & Recommendations For Revitalizing The  
Central City Economy & Beyond



**PREPARED FOR:**  
FRIENDS OF GREEN LOOP

**PREPARED BY:**  
EVERGREEN COMMUNITY PLANNING

**DATE:**  
JUNE 2021



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Portland State University and the sites we studied (such as the proposed Culinary Corridor) in this project are located in the heart of Portland, Oregon in Multnomah County. We honor the Indigenous people whose traditional and ancestral homelands we stand on, the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tumwater, Watlala bands of the Chinook, the Tualatin Kalapuya and many other indigenous nations of the Columbia River. Evergreen Community Planning would like to take this opportunity to thank the original caretakers of this land.

## ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Evergreen Community Planning would like to thank the following individuals for their support, guidance, and participation in this project. Evergreen Community Planning acknowledges that this report would not have been as immersive or impactful without the following individuals:

**Dr. Megan Horst, Instructor**  
*Portland State University*

**Irene Kim, Instructor**  
*Portland State University*

**Keith Jones, Executive Director**  
*Friends of Green Loop*

**Lora Lillard**  
*City of Portland Bureau of  
Planning and Sustainability*

**Mark Raggett**  
*Friends of Green Loop*

Evergreen Community Planning would also like to thank the following individuals for their time in our stakeholder engagement process:

### FOOD CART OWNERS:

**Mahmoud Zeriek**  
**Solomon Tefera**  
**Bailun Sun**  
**Matt Breslow**  
**Tali Ovadia**  
**Jacky Ren**  
**Jane Kim**  
**Sabrina Zhang**  
**Lily Chen**

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### PUBLIC AGENCY CONTACTS:

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## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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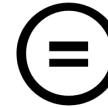
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**FRIENDS  
OF  
GREEN LOOP**



**BUREAU OF  
PLANNING +  
SUSTAINABILITY**



**FOOD  
CARTOLOGY  
2021**

Evergreen Community Planning (ECP), a PSU MURP student workshop group, partnered with Friends of Green Loop (FOGL) and City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) to conduct a study on the status of the food cart industry in Portland. This was intended to focus on factors contributing to economic resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and other changes to the city's landscape, as well as barriers to accessibility within the industry for individual vendors. Friends of Green Loop intended this study to be an update to the 2008 MURP workshop Food Cartology, which explored the then recent emergence of the food cart industry in Portland and served as a key business model for recovering from the concurrent recession. ECP conducted an existing conditions analysis, policy review, case studies, and an expansive community engagement process to explore food carts as they exist in Portland today, with the intention of understanding barriers for historically marginalized groups, as well as exploring the potential for adding food carts into the public right-of-way. ECP conducted interviews with community organizations, food cart vendors, and public agency officials to gather input from a wealth of different sources.

The results of these interviews indicated that while food carts are celebrated within the city for their placemaking qualities and displays of cultural diversity, vendors often do not have the personal, public, or community resources to easily start their businesses, be successful and respond to threats of displacement. This report addresses this disparity by examining the existing policies and regulations surrounding food carts and identifying strategies that City agencies could adopt to better support this industry. Key recommendations outline details pertaining to the need for better cross-bureau collaboration and plans to mitigate displacement impacts.

ECP outlines their methodology, research, engagement themes, and subsequent recommendations in this document.







# PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Food Cartology 2021: Recovery in the Central City report was commissioned by Keith Jones, the Executive Director of the Friends of Green Loop (FOGL). This community-based organization promotes and advocates for the development of the Green Loop, a six-mile linear park around downtown Portland which emphasizes placemaking, increasing access to destinations within the Central City and economic development.

## \*food•cart

/ fōd kärt/

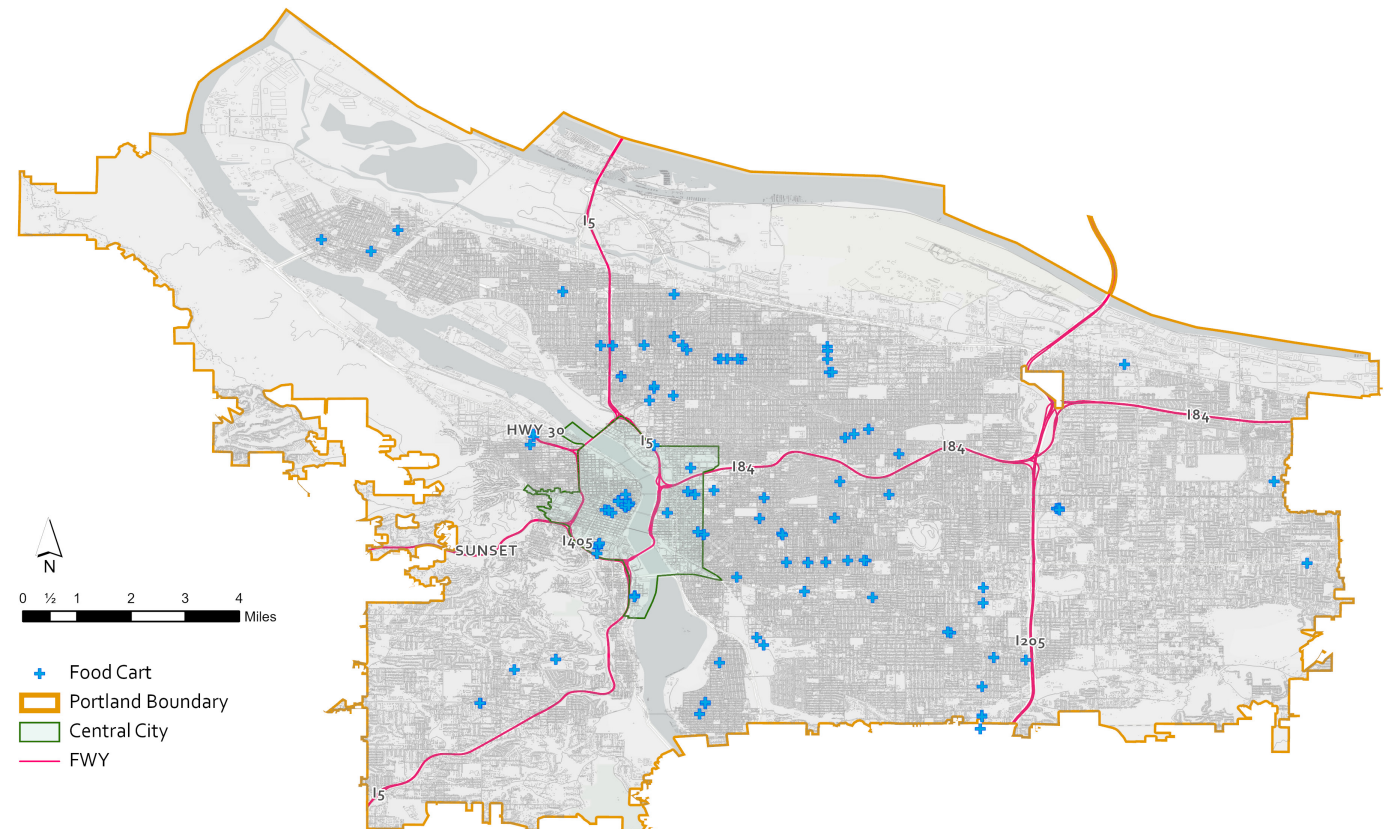
noun

*“a pulled trailer, differentiated from food trucks, push carts or other mobile food units”*

The report explores the role of food carts in the Central City, specifically along the Green Loop. It explores how food carts can be better supported and embraced by the City and other stakeholders to support a thriving downtown. As the City of Portland undertakes recovery activities following the devastating effects of the global pandemic, the timing of this report is significant. Small businesses, such as food carts, are poised to play a key role in the rebuilding process.

## FOOD CARTS IN OPERATION AS OF DECEMBER 2020

Data Source: Travel Portland

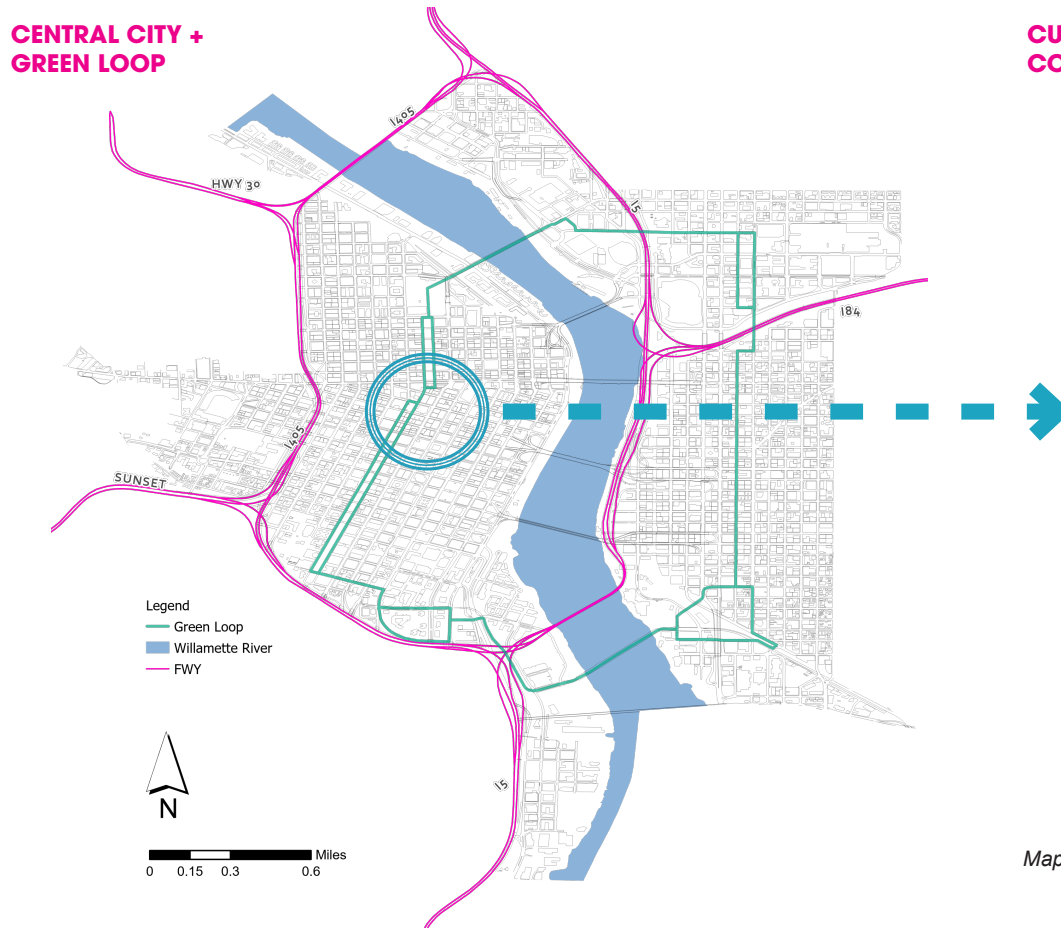


Map by Evergreen Community Planning

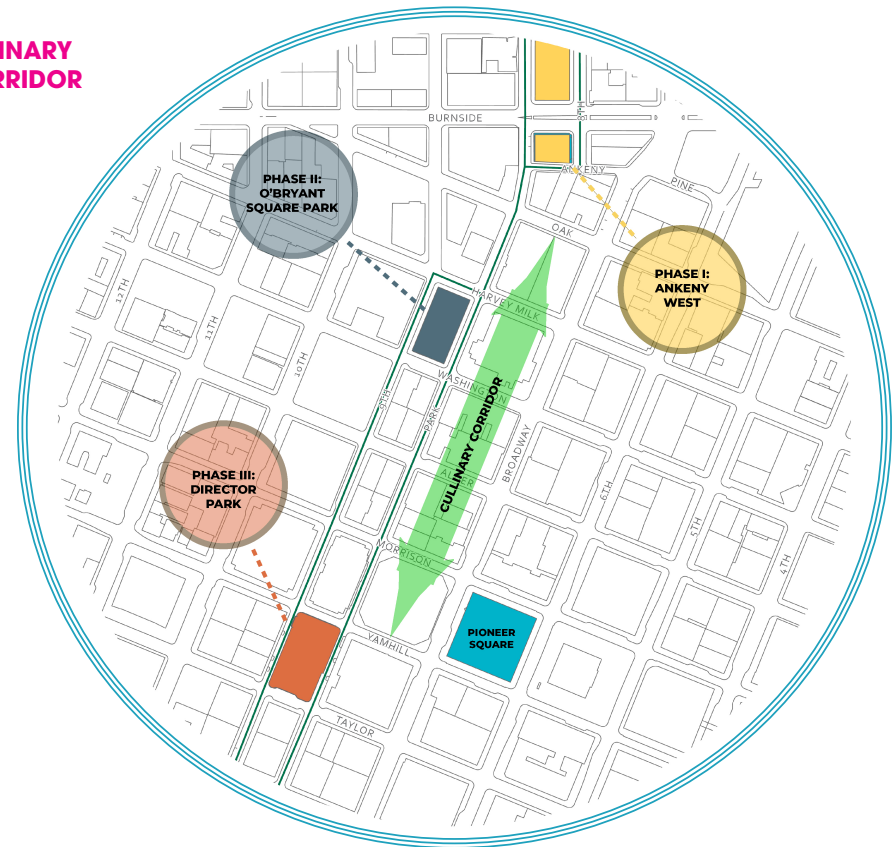
# PROJECT BACKGROUND

During the challenges of the 2008-2009 recession, food carts were observed to be strong businesses in weathering the economic downturn and later stimulating the economy during recovery. They appear to be similarly situated to reprise this role following the global pandemic of 2020-2021. In addition to supporting the activities of the Friends of Green Loop, this report is also designed to be referenced by public agencies. The report was commissioned by Friends of Green Loop in collaboration with Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS). The information and insights gathered through engagement with community and agency representatives, along with general policy analysis, generated actionable recommendations on ways to incorporate food carts into Portland planning by

public agencies. Already, the popularity of food carts has led to their inclusion in city marketing efforts, as seen on Travel Oregon's website<sup>1</sup>, and in city planning initiatives. For example, food carts are an especially important planning feature of the Green Loop through the Central City. The Green Loop was included in the 2035 Central City Comprehensive Plan as a key amenity, noting the role it had in drawing people downtown<sup>2</sup>.



## CULINARY CORRIDOR



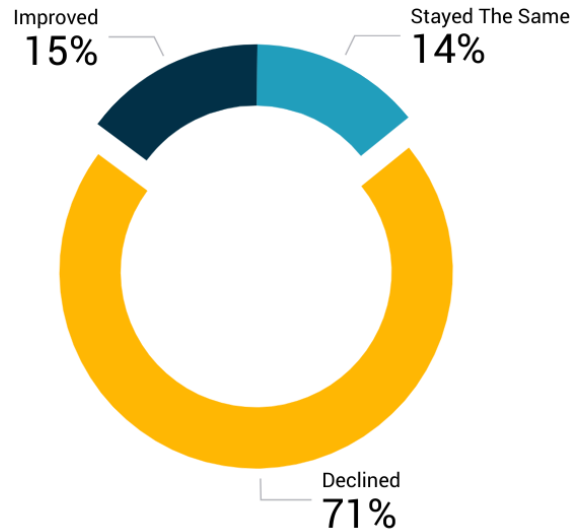
Maps by Evergreen Community Planning



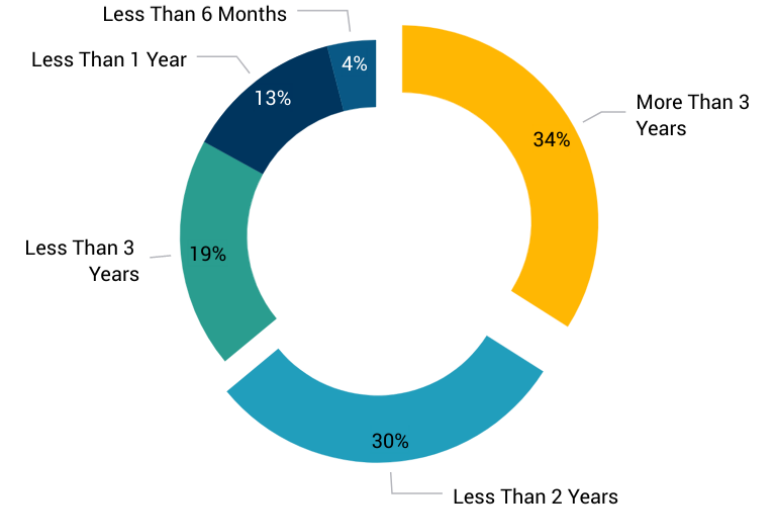
# PROJECT BACKGROUND

Today, despite widespread support, food cart owners still face challenges to starting and maintaining their businesses in Central City. First, there has been an increase in downtown developments which has displaced food carts from private parking lots where they have traditionally operated their businesses. This has been a longstanding issue with over half of food cart owners noting that finding a spot for their business is a key challenge<sup>3</sup>. Second, there has been a significant loss of foot traffic in the Central City due to the COVID-19 pandemic response which has resulted in a substantial loss of profit for these businesses who rely on downtown workers, students, and tourists for their sales. Additionally, recent political and civil demonstrations in Portland have changed public perceptions of the downtown area further reducing incentives for potential customers to visit.

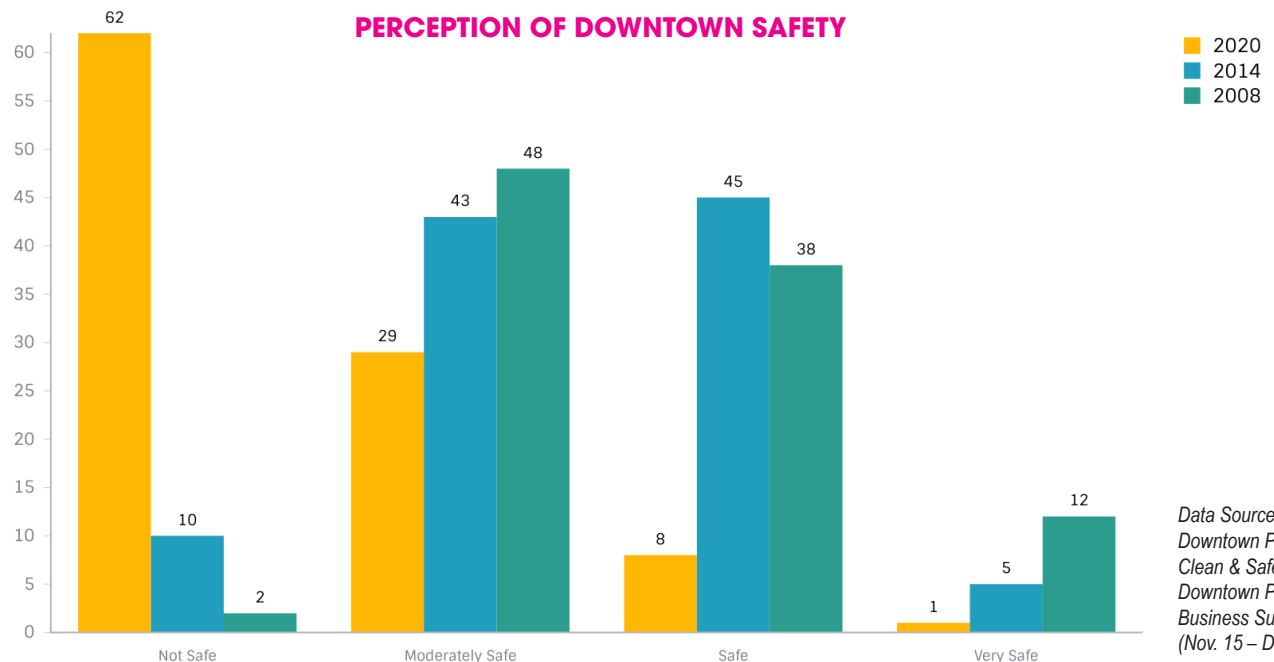
**BUSINESS HEALTH IN 2020**



**RECOVERY TIME OF BUSINESS POST PANDEMIC**



**PERCEPTION OF DOWNTOWN SAFETY**



Data Source:  
Downtown Portland  
Clean & Safe 2020  
Downtown Portland  
Business Survey  
(Nov. 15 – Dec. 31,

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

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The combination of these challenges presented by development displacement and the pandemic reveal the need for a strong, coordinated, and collaborative approach between food cart owners, the city, and other stakeholders in order to sustain the food cart industry and leverage the unique role it plays in the city's downtown economy.

This presented the opportunity for Friends of Green Loop and Evergreen Community Planning to work together to identify the key needs of food cart owners, explore how to intentionally bring them into recovery and long-term planning, assess current policies and procedures for food cart permitting, and focus on supporting immigrant and people of color communities who make up a large share of vendors in this sector.

### FINDINGS FROM 2008 REPORT

In 2008, while food carts were gaining popularity in Portland, the City was entering the uncharted territory of regulating this new industry and making informed policy decisions. The Bureau of Planning partnered with Urban Vitality Group (UVG), a PSU Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) student workshop team to better understand how food carts operated, who was operating them, and how food carts were impacting their local street locations and larger neighborhoods.

The Bureau was also interested in how food carts served as a low-barrier business opportunity for low-income and immigrant residents. UVG set out to specifically answer questions about neighborhood livability ("What effects do food carts have on street vitality and neighborhood life?") and community economic development ("To what extent do food carts serve as an entry-point into long-term business ownership?")<sup>4</sup>.

UVG reviewed relevant literature, collected data, and gathered stakeholder input for their report, *Food Cartology: Rethinking Urban Spaces as People Spaces*. They began with an exploration of the history of food carts and continued to review relevant literature about the operation and regulation of mobile food courts more widely. They conducted site and cart inventories at four different food cart pod locations throughout Portland, and created maps of actively used food carts generally. Their engagement processes included vendor surveys, an online survey for general public perception, public intercept surveys (pedestrians near selected food cart pod sites), and neighborhood business surveys<sup>5</sup>.

They also conducted in-depth interviews with some cart owners as well as other key stakeholders, such as City of Portland and Multnomah County employees who are involved in the food cart permitting process. Through this process, UVG compiled several key findings, including:

- *Food carts have positive impacts on street vitality and neighborhood life in lower density residential neighborhoods as well as in the high-density downtown area<sup>6</sup>.*
- *When a cluster of carts is located on a private site, the heightened intensity of use can negatively impact the surrounding community, primarily from the lack of trash cans<sup>7</sup>.*
- *Food carts represent beneficial employment opportunities because they provide an improved quality of life and promote social interactions between owners and customers<sup>8</sup>.*
- *Despite the beneficial opportunities that food carts can provide, there are numerous challenges to owning a food cart<sup>9</sup>.*
- *Food cart owners do not frequently access small business development resources available to them, such as bank loans and other forms of assistance<sup>10</sup>.*

Their primary recommendations, based on these findings, were to identify additional locations for food carts, increase awareness of informational resources for stakeholders in the food cart industry by connecting them with existing programs, and promote innovative urban design elements that support place-making centered around food cart pods. Friends of Green Loop have stated that the 2008 Food Cartology report has been incredibly useful for their advocacy work and with lobbying Portland's public agencies to make the Central City a safe and reliable place for food carts to exist.

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

## ORIENTATION OF 2021 REPORT

Friends of Green Loop and Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability approached Evergreen Community Planning to gather information and stories from food cart owners about the challenges and opportunities of owning and operating a food cart in Portland's Central City and build on the findings of the 2008 study highlighted above. This report is a follow-up to the initial report with a focus on Downtown Portland. Specific interest is taken in evaluating the long-term sustainability of food carts as small-businesses and how to assist them in recovery following development displacements and loss-of-revenue throughout the pandemic.

Where the 2008 study was focused on gathering an understanding of how food carts fit into Portland's economic vitality, the 2021 update looks to see how the changes to downtown through increasing development and the impact of the pandemic has affected food cart owners. Based on these factors and insights gained through stakeholder interviews, this report compiled policy recommendations on how Portland's planning agencies can begin to include food carts into their planning efforts.

While the 2008 study revealed that there is a much lower financial barrier to entry for entrepreneurs (especially for people of color and immigrant populations) to open a food cart rather than a brick-and-mortar storefront, there are a number of other factors that can hinder the success of these small businesses. For one, current City regulations make it difficult for a food cart to operate on public land or in the city's right-of-way. This relegates food cart owners to privately owned lots that can operate with limited oversight and regulation of the food cart's space, which was the area of focus for the 2008 study.

The stability of food carts downtown was shown to be dependent on the profitability of downtown development as most food cart pods exist on undeveloped parcels and surface parking lots<sup>11</sup>. When market conditions change and parcels are developed, there are few locations downtown for food carts to be relocated. This report focuses on identifying existing barriers to entry for prospective entrepreneurs, limits to transitioning from a cart to a brick-and-mortar restaurants, policy barriers for food carts in the right-of-way or on public property, and how to include food carts in existing and future planning efforts by the City of Portland. ECP pursued these desired outcomes by analyzing the existing materials compiled by Friends of Green Loop for advocating to public agencies in Portland and

supplemented this research with preferred alternatives and case studies to make recommendations on how to integrate food carts into land use planning efforts in Portland's Central City.

Additionally, engagement with multiple groups of stakeholders helped to frame and contextualize the findings and explore their perspectives and recommendations. This report includes an existing conditions analysis, case studies, outreach to city agencies and food cart owners, and policy research and analysis. These components have allowed ECP to make recommendations to Friends of Green Loop and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability on ways to improve the regulatory landscape for food carts in the City of Portland.

## BOOM CREPE, PORTLAND, OR



Image: Instagram User spoonfulofeva



# EQUITY LENS

## EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

### STRUCTURAL EQUITY

*Examines historic advantages and disadvantages for specific communities.* The research portion of this project worked to uncover how food cart owners may have faced discrimination in running their businesses. Specific focus was given to the potential barriers that they may have faced in accessing and completing City requirements to acquire permits and licenses. Additional focus was given to food cart collaboration to determine if they have been afforded the opportunity to work collectively to better advocate for their needs, especially immigrant and people of color operators. ECP also examined how security and safety around food cart pods have impacted these communities.

### PROCEDURAL EQUITY

*Examines how to include historically excluded residents in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project.* ECP realizes that Portland food cart owners represent a wide range of individuals and worked to reach as many as possible through interviews during the engagement phase in order to ensure diverse perspectives were incorporated into the needs assessment and recommendations. Specific focus was given to ensure that people of color, immigrant, and women-owned business owners were interviewed. A key area of discussion revolved around how the City communicated with these business owners.

### DISTRIBUTIONAL EQUITY

*Examines how the distribution of civic resources and investment explicitly account for potential racially disparate outcomes.* The 2008 study noted that most food cart owners did not access City or other external resources to help them start their business<sup>12</sup>. Through background research and engagement with different stakeholder groups, ECP explored why these resources have not been accessed. The report provides recommendations on potential ways to bridge the gap between available resources and the food cart owners, especially as lack of awareness and communication seemed to be a driving factor.

### TRANSGENERATIONAL EQUITY

*Examines if the policy or project will result in unfair burdens on future generations.* Although 66% of food cart owners (and 77% in downtown) noted that their food cart business was a good way to support themselves, only a small percentage had funds saved for an emergency. Over half responded that lack of money was the main barrier to expanding their business. Additionally, independence was cited as a main motivation for running a food cart business and many were family-owned businesses<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, ECP worked to identify policies and recommendations that respond to the long-term needs of food cart owners in order to create an environment where they can remain economically viable, have protections against displacement, and remain autonomous, especially for immigrant, people of color, and women entrepreneurs who see their food cart as an opportunity to establish independence and provide for their family.

The Food Cartology report from 2008 found that many food carts are immigrant owned, with more than half of the respondents at the time noting that they had been born outside of the United States<sup>14</sup>. Although a more recent demographic survey of food cart owners has yet to be conducted, numerous news articles continue to note the high share of immigrants that continue to work in the sector, and are thus disproportionately impacted by developments that displace their businesses<sup>15</sup>.

Furthermore, throughout this project's engagement process with different stakeholder groups, numerous respondents highlighted the diversity of demographics represented in the food cart sector. ECP is committed to approaching this project with an equity lens by intentionally addressing equity considerations through each phase of the project. ECP understands the approach of leading with an equity lens to be the process of uncovering both historical and present injustices,

while actively pursuing policies and practices that work to redress disparate outcomes on the basis of race, sex, gender, income, disabilities, language, country of origin and more with particular consideration given to the intersectionality of these identities which have often further exacerbated oppression and/or discrimination<sup>16</sup>. Before beginning the project, ECP worked to identify potential areas of inequities and developed the foundation from which to launch the project across four pillars of equity (table above). Then, as the work plan was finalized, each phase of the project was discussed to examine how these elements could be incorporated into leading and implementing the project from an equity standpoint.

## EQUITY LENS

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During the background research phase, it was noted that research would try to be centered around how policies and procedures have possibly created barriers for immigrant, limited English proficiency, women and people of color entrepreneurs from successfully starting and running their business. However, due to the relatively recent emergence of this industry in Portland as a legitimate business, there are few reports, articles, or explicit policies available to highlight potential discriminations or inequities for these groups. Additionally, the case studies attempted to explore cities that had shared characteristics with Portland, and were focused on marginalized entrepreneurs.

Again, there was a distinct lack of literature that specifically addressed the experiences of these communities and their work in the mobile food unit industry, suggesting that they have likely often been overlooked and their stories not told. Due to the time constraints tied to this project, ECP was not able to pursue further research, but an area of consideration for future reports or further exploration would be to look into studies that discuss either the food sector more generally, or micro-businesses more specifically, and explore the experiences of these often-marginalized communities in those industries and determine how findings there might be similarly extrapolated to be applied to food carts.

ECP addressed the gaps in literature around people of color, immigrant, non-English speaking, and women entrepreneurs through intentional engagement strategies, particularly with food cart owners. The majority of food cart owners engaged in the interview process identified with at least one, if not several, of these communities which allowed ECP to get a glimpse into the experiences faced by food cart owners. During engagement with community organizations (non-food cart owners and public agencies), ECP also worked to be intentional in gathering the perspectives from a broad range of stakeholders. These included neighborhood associations, pod managers, food associations, tourism agencies, and other community-based nonprofits. The information gathered during these interviews helped to shine light on the challenges faced by food carts in general, and how these barriers can be exacerbated for individuals who identify with a historically marginalized community.

**“THERE IS OFTEN A FOCUS ON THE NEAR TERM VISION OF JUST ‘GETTING PEOPLE IN’ THAT WE MISS SOME OF THE LONGER TERM IMPACTS. CITY BUREAUS ARE THINKING ON A 30-YEAR CYCLE, AND BUSINESSES ARE OPERATING ON A 5-YEAR CYCLE.”**

**- LISA ABUAF, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AT PROSPER PORTLAND**

When engaging bureaus, a key aspect of equity that was discussed was the idea behind transgenerational equity, and how contemporary decisions being made could have unintended consequences down the road. Respondents from several of the public agencies noted that they did not want to rush into decisions, such as hosting food cart pods on public property, as it may result in a burden on these agencies when the pod operator pulls out or transitions to a different entity. There was also an emphasis on ensuring that food cart owners were not taken advantage of by being placed in unviable locations, promised long-term solutions but given short-term compromises, or not being able to access sufficient support in operating their business. In light of these elements exposed during each phase of the project, ECP emphasized specific findings in each section of the report and how it relates to the project from an equity perspective. This approach helps to tie a unifying thread through the whole project, connecting the case studies to the engagement to the recommendations. As this report is heavily centered around developing actionable policy recommendations that can be pursued by the city and other stakeholders, ensuring that they were equitable approaches was paramount for ECP during compilation.



# PROJECT METHODOLOGY

## OVERVIEW

Beginning this project in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic created unique circumstances for Evergreen Community Planning. The ECP team had to determine how best to conduct the project while many food carts were not actively operating, city bureau staff were not at their offices, and the downtown area had become largely dormant. Despite these challenges, it was still essential to gather useful information and produce recommendations that could steer responses to addressing the challenges of site displacement and pandemic impacts faced by food cart owners. Therefore, the decision was made to approach the project with a focus primarily on the policy and regulatory aspects surrounding food carts rather than visiting and evaluating specific physical spaces or pods. This approach allowed ECP to prioritize engagement with relevant stakeholders and robust research as both aspects were able to be largely completed remotely.

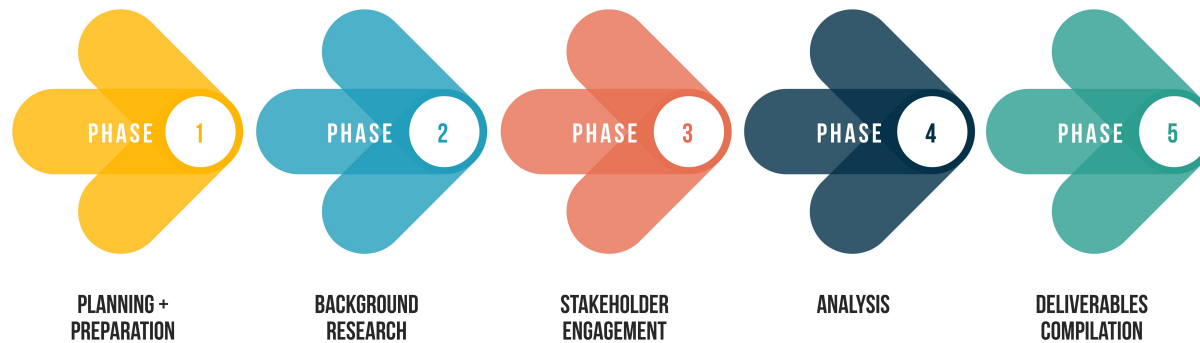
The ECP team divided the project into five project phases that spanned a six month period from January to June 2021. The first phase involved laying the groundwork for all the activities to come, and required a dialogue between ECP and the client to determine the focus of the project and to clarify the expectations around the final deliverables (with input and guidance from course professors Dr. Megan Horst and Irene Kim). The bulk of the project activities were found in the second and third phases which involved gathering background research and community engagement, respectively.

## PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE



# PROJECT METHODOLOGY

## PROJECT PHASES



The fourth phase involved compiling and analyzing the findings gathered in earlier stages to determine what recommendations could be made. Finally, the fifth phase was focused on synthesizing all the gathered content and conclusions into a technical report (this document) and preparing several presentations to share with different stakeholder groups. More information regarding the timeline and work plan used to guide this project can be found in the MOU and Work Plan appendix attached to this report.

## DEFINING KEY TERMS

The mobile food industry spans a number of different types of vending units and, due to the technical nature of policies and permitting, can become quite complex. Therefore, this section is meant to assist in clarifying some key terms and how they are understood by ECP in the context of this report.

**Mobile Food Units:** This is an all-encompassing term to address food vending from non-permanent structures, including push carts, food trucks, food trailers, and food carts. All types of Mobile Food Units fall under the purview of Multnomah County

Health Department which regulates businesses that prepare and sell food commodities.

**Food Trucks:** These are food vending units that are licensed, motorized vehicles that are completely self-contained meaning that the supplies necessary to produce food (i.e. propane for fuel, water, waste water, etc.) are all within the vehicle with no external connections required. They also generally rely on a commissary kitchen to pre-prepare much of their food and dispose of waste and greywater. In Portland, Food Trucks are not permitted to operate freely in the Central City and as a result are not very present throughout the urban area. Although Food Trucks can be easily brought into an area, there can be more permitting requirements as they cross the city boundaries throughout a metro area.

**Push Carts:** These are non-motorized stands that are on wheels and so can be moved around and generally occupy the right-of-way, such as the sidewalk. Like Food Trucks, Push Carts generally need access to a commissary kitchen to prepare their food products and dispose of waste and must be able to be self-contained. In Portland, these are permitted under Portland Bureau of Transportation,

although are required to operate in very precise places within specific timeframes and are not able to remain overnight at any location. Push Carts also fall under the purview of the Bureau of Development Services as they operate in public spaces and must adhere to strict design criteria.



Example of Food Cart



# PROJECT METHODOLOGY

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**Food Carts:** These are non-motorized, semi-permanent trailers, but must have functional wheels, an axle for towing, and be located in a commercial zone, so as to still be considered a vehicle and not have to adhere to zoning or building regulations - if the wheels are removed, the cart is considered to be a building. Generally the carts operate on private property, such as parking lots, but must still obtain permits for electricity and plumbing if connected to main hook-ups. Most carts connect to electrical circuits, but use internal tank systems to collect wastewater.

Although technically mobile, these food units tend to remain in one location for an extended period of time, often several years. In Portland, these have become the primary type of mobile food unit as compared to Food Trucks or Push Carts, likely because of fewer regulations surrounding their use and design as they have historically operated on private property rather than directly in public spaces such as the road, parking spots, or the sidewalk. At the time of this report, there were an estimated 458 carts, although with the pandemic it was difficult to determine how many were actively in operation.

**Pods:** In the Portland metro context, pods refer to a cluster or group of food carts operating together in close proximity on the same lot. These are generally privately owned lots or parcels that lease out the space to food carts to rent and then provide some amenities such as waste and water disposal and electricity. By grouping together, the food carts are able to employ place-making strategies, making the lot a destination that individuals choose to visit. At the time of this report, there were an estimated 49 pods throughout the city, although new ones were appearing regularly even in the short time span of this study.

**Right-of-Way (ROW):** This is the space of land reserved for transportation use which can range from paths or sidewalks for pedestrian and bike use, to roads, railroads, or even waterways for vehicle use. For the context of this project, ROW is used to refer to roads, streets, paths, and sidewalks not on private property.

**Public Space:** Public space is broader than right-of-way as it includes all public spaces where life happens, not only roads and paths. This includes shared spaces such as parks, public plazas, walkways, bike lanes, streets, and curbs as well as temporary closed streets. For food vendors to operate in these spaces, they need permits approved by the managing city bureau and generally cannot take up a position that blocks the right-of-way.

**Commissary Kitchen:** Due to the limited space available in any type of mobile food unit, many vendors turn to commissary kitchens to prepare, store, and clean their food products. These are commercial kitchens that are leased out for food preparation, allowing the vendor to have more space, connection to utilities, and reduce costs by not requiring them to own their own kitchen. For some types of mobile food units, such as carts and trucks, there are regulations stipulating the use of commissary kitchens due to the mobile nature of their unit. Food carts are generally a bit larger, and by being semi-permanent are able to connect to utilities and not have to rely on commissary kitchens to prepare their food items.

**Greywater:** This is the liquid waste created by food preparation usually generated from washing items such as fruits, vegetables, pots, pans and utensils. As there is often cleaning products and grease mixed in with this water from the kitchen, it cannot

be dumped on the ground or into the street drains but must be either disposed through a connection to a sewer hook-up, or collected in a bin and disposed of elsewhere.

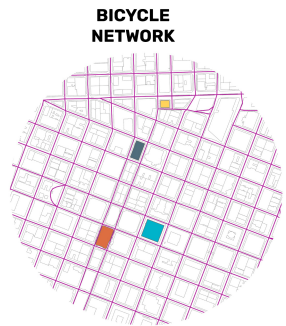
**Wastewater:** This is liquid waste that may have any kind of human waste in it. Water discharge from food carts is considered wastewater if any handwashing is happening within the cart. Even though there is no bathroom in the cart, because vendors are expected to be washing their hands in the cart, the discharge is considered wastewater and requires a sewer hook-up or a licensed wastewater hauler.

**Central City & Downtown:** This refers to the urban center of Portland, where population is the densest. There are 10 subdistricts, or neighborhoods, within the central city of Portland, and Downtown is one of these, which is the area bordered by Burnside Street to the North, by the 405 Highway to the West and South, and the waterfront to the East.

**Portland Government:** Portland is one of the few large cities in the United States that has a Commission form of government. This means that there are 6 elected officials (Mayor, 4 Commissioners, and the Auditor) who oversee the different city bureaus, budgets and hold a quasi-judicial role for land-use appeals<sup>17</sup>.

# PROJECT METHODOLOGY

## DETAILED SITE AREA ANALYSIS: CULINARY CORRIDOR



The area is well connected to the City's bicycle network, enhancing the area's connectivity to other parts of the city.

### LEGEND

.25 mile radius from the center of the Culinary Corridor. Everything within this radius is less than a 5 minute walk. The area is well connected to transit and several major hotel options are within a short walk.

- Green Loop
- Hotel
- MAX/Streetcar
- Streetcar
- MAX



**PHASE II:  
O'BRYANT SQUARE**



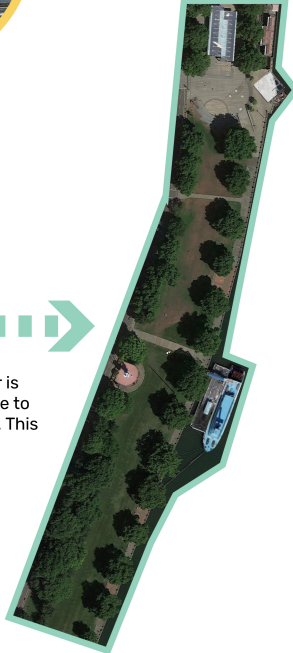
**PHASE III:  
DIRECTOR PARK**



**PHASE I:  
ANKENY WEST**



**PIONEER  
SQUARE**



**TOM MCCALL  
WATERFRONT PARK**

The heart of the Culinary Corridor is less than a .5 mile to Tom McCall Park. This is less than a 10 minute walk.

# PROJECT METHODOLOGY

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

To frame the project, ECP chose to pursue two avenues of background research. For the first avenue, contextualization of the project was important to understand research that had been done before, as well as the history of food carts in Portland. Since this report was commissioned as an updated study to the 2008 Food Cartology Study, it was first necessary to thoroughly unpack this report and determine what the research had already concluded to allow ECP to design implementation tools which build off existing findings. Additionally, to understand how policies and regulations had come to impact mobile food units, it was useful to build out a timeline of mobile food units in Portland and the significant events that occurred and how they impacted the trajectory of these businesses.

The second avenue of background research was examining policies and regulations that pertained to mobile food units. One approach was to examine public city documents that outlined the requirements for obtaining permits to operate a mobile food unit. There are several bureaus involved in this type of oversight in Portland, although the primary agency is the Multnomah County Health Department which regulates and distributes health permits for businesses that prepare and sell food. This policy analysis was complemented by a secondary approach which looked at research outside of the Portland metro area through the use of case studies.

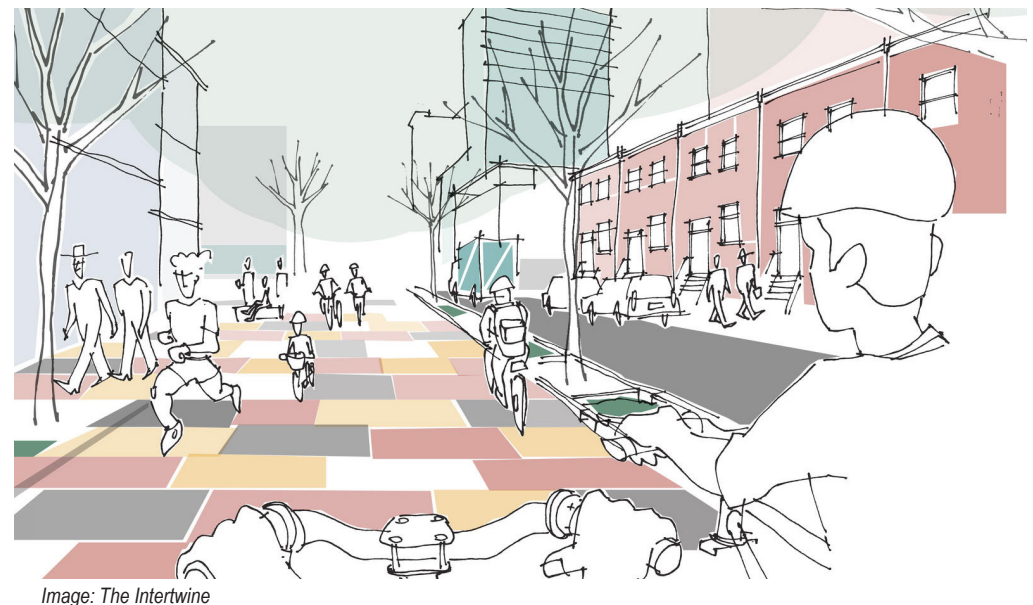
## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The community engagement portion of this project took place between late February and early May. During this time, ECP worked to engage three different stakeholder groups: Community Organizations, Food Cart Owners, and Public Agencies. Interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom, or through direct phone calls, and were facilitated by two team members from ECP - one who oriented the discussion and asked questions while the other took notes.

The timing of the interviews ranged between thirty and sixty minutes and were structured around a pre-established set of questions as prompts (Appendix pg. 80), although ECP was flexible to follow the conversation to focus on the most relevant questions or aspects. ECP contacted interviewees via email generally a week before meeting with them to confirm their willingness to participate and availability. The questions were sent the day before, allowing the interviewees to prepare responses if they felt that were necessary. For several interviews, fol-

low-up questions were sent via email to ask clarifying questions or perspectives on aspects raised in interviews with other stakeholders. The list of interviewees was developed in collaboration with the client (FOGL and BPS) who identified key stakeholders from their background knowledge of working with the food cart industry. During interviews, ECP was often referred to additional stakeholders by the interviewees themselves and a number of these were contacted and interviewed. In addition to engagement through interviews across these three stakeholder groups, ECP also developed a survey to broaden the scope of engagement and allow non-interviewed stakeholders to share their perspectives and also collect more quantitative data to supplement the qualitative information gathered during interviews

## GREEN LOOP CONCEPTUAL SKETCH





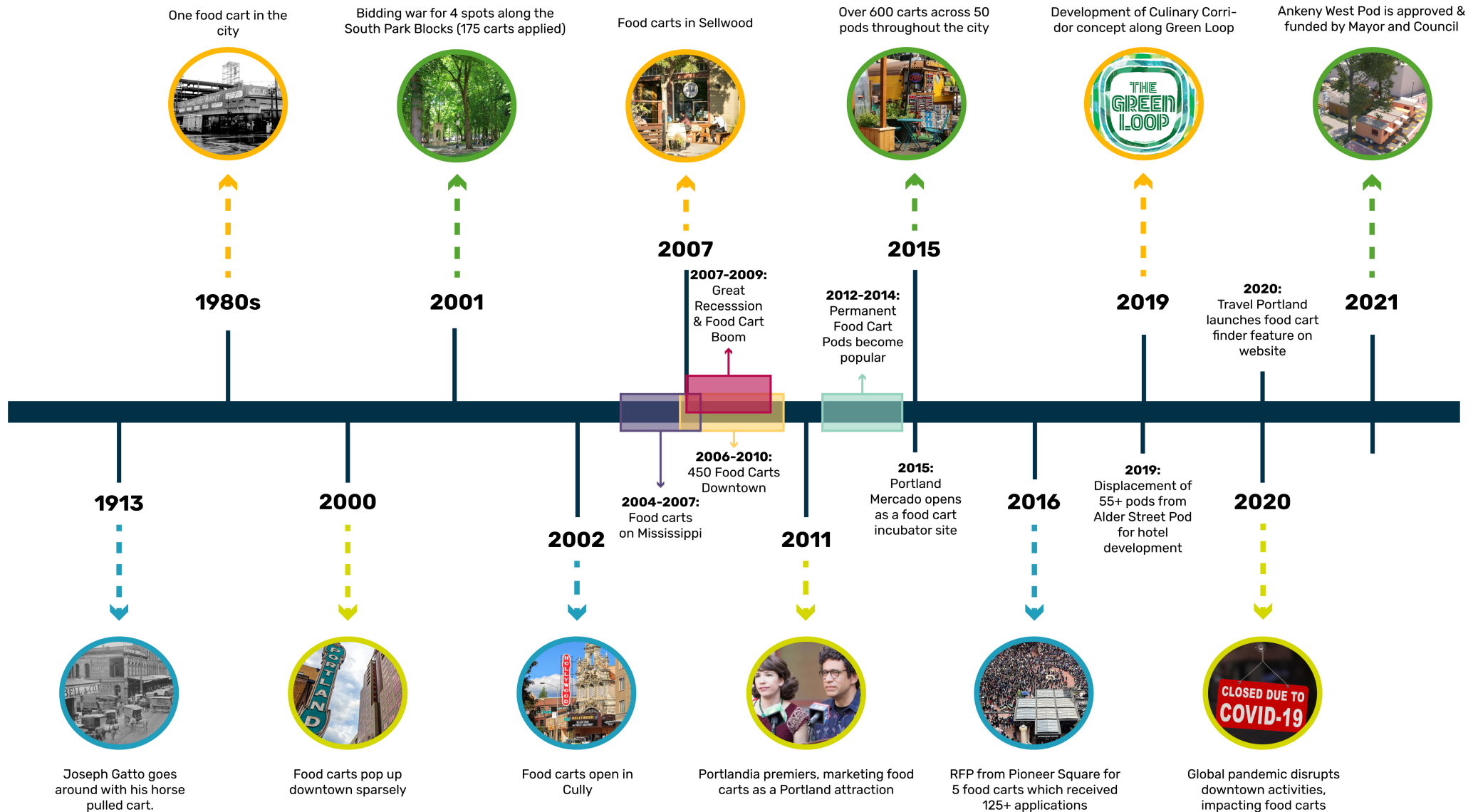


## 4. EXISTING CONDITIONS



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## TIMELINE: PORTLAND'S FOOD CART HISTORY



Timeline by Evergreen Community Planning

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## EARLY HISTORY

While Portland's iconic food cart scene might seem like a mere contemporary product of modern consumption practices, food carts actually have a long-rooted history in the Rose City. Joseph Gatto is widely touted as the first food cart vendor in Portland. Travel blogs and cultural exposés alike all begin their exploration of the explosion of food carts in Portland by describing how Gatto, an Italian immigrant, began selling produce from his horse-drawn cart as early as 1913<sup>18</sup>. The city's first stationary food cart was built in 1965. It was a Hebrew National stand that sold hot dogs across the street from City Hall<sup>19</sup>. While food carts remained sparse throughout the city until a dramatic boom in the late 2000s, Multnomah County does have records of mobile food unit licenses stretching back to the 1970s, including one for the "Oaxaca Super Tacos" cart which remained in operation until 2016. Other cities have relied on mobile food units, such as carts, trucks, and push carts, in their community development initiatives, but it was not until the Great Recession of 2008 when food carts truly became a part of Portland's food scene and identity.

## 2008 RECESSION

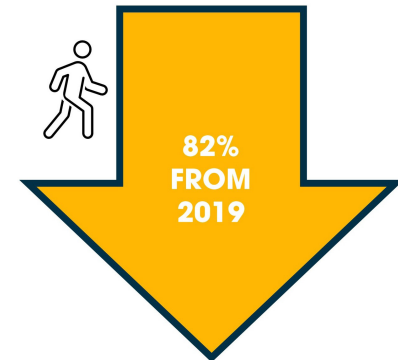
The economic recession that followed the housing crisis in 2007 created conditions that made food carts attractive for both entrepreneurs and consumers alike. Mass unemployment and low startup and operation costs lured laid-off chefs, immigrants, and first-time business owners to the food cart game: "The recession created an explosion for this food culture because it allowed people to be adventurous without spending too much."<sup>20</sup> Lower operating costs mean lower meal costs, which was attractive for financially struggling Portlanders and tourists wishing to travel on a budget.

The culturally diverse backgrounds of food cart operators allowed for endless cuisine options at affordable price points. Under these circumstances, the food cart scene boomed. Within the city of Portland alone, there was a 25 percent increase in food cart licenses issued between 2008 to 2009 (461)<sup>21</sup>. They were no longer a kitschy food trend to be found on select corners of the city; instead, food carts had grown to become a local industry of their own making. Food carts played a central role in saving culinary businesses at various levels, and drove significant local economic activity in a recovering city. Due to their success during this challenging time, the narrative that food carts largely "beat" the recession has become celebrated amongst food cart owners, other industry members, local media, and community members. The resilience, creativity, and "do-it-yourself" mentality of food cart owners embodies a shared sense of local pride that has continued to be an integral part of Portland culture for over a decade.

## FOOD CARTS: CURRENT CONTEXT

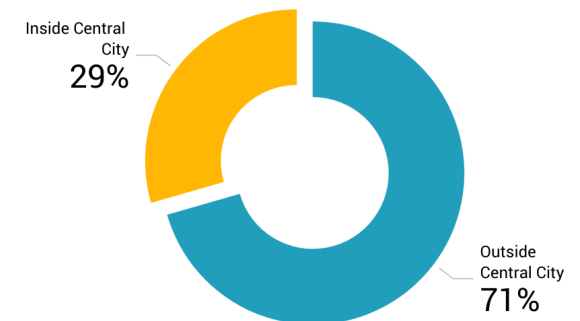
Now, over a decade after the Great Recession and the "food cart boom," the food cart industry is facing a new set of challenges. Development and investment in land across the city has threatened to displace food cart pods that have traditionally operated on private lots, impacting both long-standing and new food carts alike. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has created intense hurdles for all service industry businesses, but especially food carts who rely on an active, thriving environment for their clientele. With downtown office workers now working from home, fewer tourists, social protests, and the subsequent actions taken by law enforcement and community members have continued to discourage local travel to the Central City area where a large number of food carts are located.

## DOWNTOWN FOOT TRAFFIC



Data Source: Downtown Portland Clean & Safe 2020 Downtown Portland Business Survey (Nov. 15 – Dec. 31, 2020)

## FOOD CARTS IN OPERATION AS OF MARCH 2021



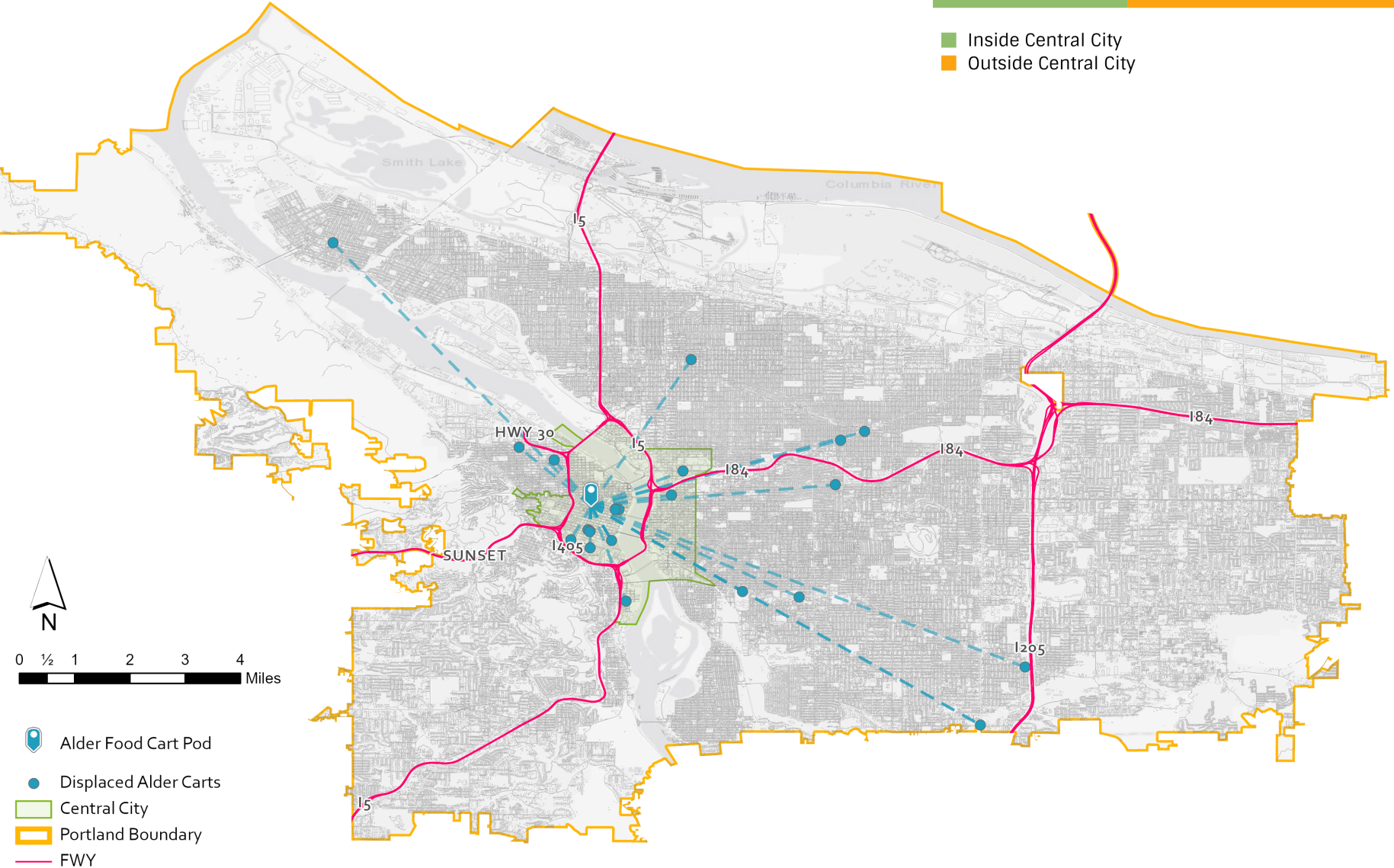
Data Source: Travel Portland



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## DISPLACED ALDER FOOD CARTS OPERATING LOCATION AS OF MARCH 2021

Map + Analysis by Evergreen Community Planning



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## COVID-19

While the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on every industry, it is hard to imagine that any were hit as hard as the food industry. 81% of Oregon restaurant workers lost their jobs in the early stages of the pandemic<sup>22</sup>. Within one month of lockdown, more than four percent of restaurants in Oregon realized they would not survive and announced they were closing permanently. These closings have only come more rapidly as the pandemic has dragged on for over a year. Eater PDX has maintained a “Running List of Portland’s Restaurant, Bar, and Food Cart Closures” while popular blog Portland Food Maps has maintained a “Closings Archive” of pandemic closures<sup>23</sup>.

Total numbers for local closures at this point in the pandemic aren’t yet available (especially as some restaurants maintain that they are closed currently with their future uncertain), but it is estimated that more than 110,000 restaurants closed nationally before the end of 2020<sup>24</sup>. It is in this climate that many are looking to food carts as a pandemic-proof alternative, with fewer overhead costs, less staffing, and more flexibility with location and scheduling being the key attractive factors.

Eater PDX wrote: “As brick-and-mortar restaurants scrambled to devise sustainable to-go plans during the pandemic, food carts were able to continue doing what they do best: adapt.”<sup>25</sup> When lockdown was first ordered in mid-March 2020, all restaurants had to become take-out only. But food carts, at least theoretically, are already all take-out only, all the time. Due to their location in open-air environments, many Portlanders felt more comfortable visiting food carts to grab their to-go meals rather than entering restaurants. The low overhead that is intrinsic to the food cart model allowed for flexibility.

Food carts vendors have stayed “light on their feet” and remained “expert adaptors” in an infamously tumultuous industry. In order to survive, many food cart owners have had to raise their prices to meet additional costs imposed by landlords and health precautions which has seen some food carts close permanently<sup>26</sup>.

Others have been more successful navigating these changes due to more flexibility in regards to the regulations they must follow in comparison to brick-and-mortar restaurants, but have struggled nonetheless<sup>27</sup>. This resilience in the face of the pandemic has inspired many brick-and-mortar restaurant owners and chefs to change to the food cart model. While local media has lamented the many closures of Portland-area restaurants, they have simultaneously celebrated many openings of new food carts.

**“IT SEEMS LIKE FOOD CARTS ARE IN THE MIDST OF A RENAISSANCE — NOT JUST FOR THEIR FOOD, BUT AS LEADERS WITHIN A STRUGGLING CULINARY WORLD.”**

**- BROOKE JACKSON GLIDDEN<sup>28</sup>**

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

While food carts generally have been able to adapt and succeed during the pandemic, their stability and long-term viability are threatened by development and a changing downtown. It is often seen that as food carts have wheels, they are temporary uses that can be relocated relatively easily in order to prioritize increasing housing and employment needs on private lots. In 2019, property manager City Center Parking notified tenants of the beloved

and iconic food cart pod (the oldest in the city) at SW 10th and Alder that they had 30 days to move, as the land had been sold to a developer to build a Ritz-Carlton that incorporates residential and office space, as well as a food hall.

While Friends of Green Loop and Prosper Portland were able to find a temporary storage space for the food carts to park while planning where to relocate permanently, an article asking “Can Portland’s Food Carts Survive the City’s Development Boom?” argued that what happened at SW 10th & Alder should “serve as a cautionary tale for any city undergoing an influx of new residents and business investments, where lower-income, immigrant, and other vulnerable populations are displaced by successive waves of people attracted to the very culture those populations helped create.”

The real estate market of downtown Portland continues to rapidly develop, and food cart pods on empty parking lots are often easy targets for a city with an increasing housing shortage. Another article from the Portland Mercury, “The Disappearing Food Cart”, anxiously asks “Cheap lunches are a Portland food cart staple, but is rampant development signaling the death of the pod?” Development threatens displacement, a challenge that is not so easily met independently by “scrappy” cart owners when there are fewer and fewer alternatives.



# CITY OF PORTLAND POLICIES

Existing permit requirements for mobile food units in the City of Portland, in general, begin and end with the Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD). The MCHD defines Mobile Food Units as “any vehicle that is self-propelled, or which can be pushed or pulled down a sidewalk, street or highway, on which food is prepared, processed or converted, or which is used in selling and dispensing food to the ultimate consumer” and establishes four types of classifications<sup>29</sup>:



## CLASS I

- No potable water required or handwashing station;
- Can only serve prepackaged\* foods;
- Mult Co licenses very few Class 1 mobile units.



## CLASS II

- 5 gallons of warm potable water required for handwashing station;
- Can serve prepackaged foods and unpackaged foods\*\*;
- No preparation or assembly of food items is allowed.



## CLASS III

- Can serve a full menu with restriction on raw animal proteins that may not be processed or cooked on the unit;
- Commissary often required for Class 3 units;
- Dishwashing sink or dishwasher required if not using commissary.



## CLASS IV

- Prepare and serve a full menu;
- All requirements from other classes are required;
- Three compartment dishwashing sink or commercial dishwasher is required.

Image: Evergreen Community Planning

**\*Prepackaged Foods:** These are foods that are wrapped in a durable, impermeable wrapper. Prepackaged refers to foods processed and sealed in a commercial manufacturing facility, and also to foods processed and sealed in a licensed commissary kitchen in accordance with health department rules and regulations<sup>30</sup>. Examples include: individually packaged muffins, individual yogurt cups, and foods processed, prepared and labeled at a commissary kitchen.

**\*\* Unpackaged Foods:** Food items that are not packaged but do not require any assembly such as preparing, cooking or warming them. Examples include: fruits, nuts, or items prepared in bulk beforehand and then served into individual selling units when bought.

Mobile food units are a vehicle that must be capable of mobility at all times during operation, though there is no requirement to move at specific intervals. Most units discussed in this report stay in one location for more than 30 days. This means they must receive approval from the Prefabricated Structures Section of the Building Codes Division within Multnomah County<sup>31</sup>. The unit application must contain complete plans drawn to scale with materials descriptions. The application should also contain a list of all the necessary operating equipment. Commissary kitchens and warehouses for food and wares also need to be established and licensed prior to opening. A commissary should meet all Health Department standards for the preparation, cooking, holding, and storing of food. Neither commissaries nor warehouses are required for food cart operation, but are dependent on operational considerations.

## MOBILE UNIT SPECIFICATIONS BY CLASS

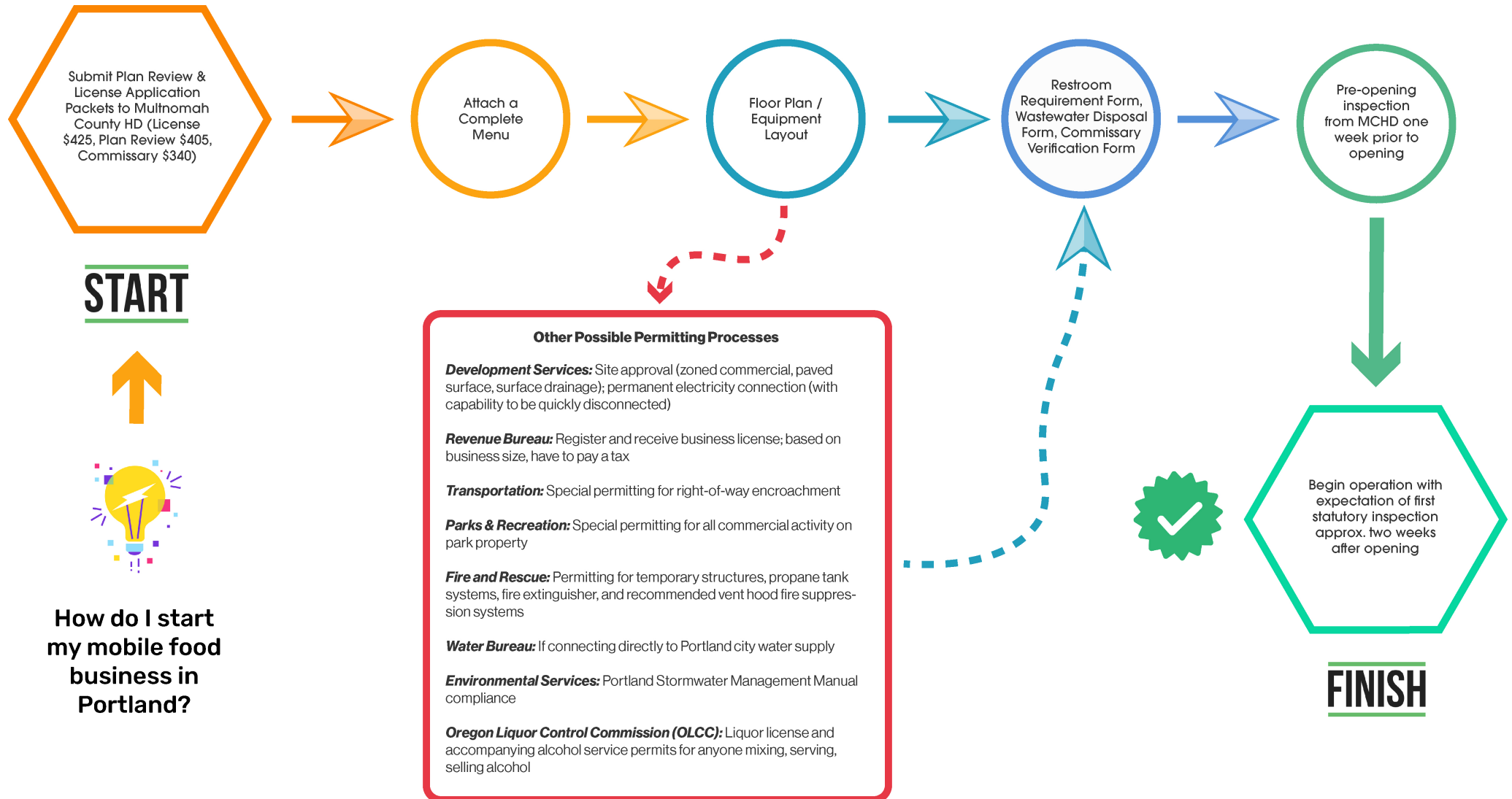
	Potable Water Tank Requirements	Wastewater Tank Requirements	Commissary Requirements	Three Compartment Sink Required?	Licensing Costs <small>Fees are expected to change in 2015</small>	Food Allowed	Handwashing Requirements	Restroom Agreement Required?
CLASS 1	None	None	May be required*	Not required	License \$370, Plan Review \$405, Commissary \$340	Prepackaged, intact foods. No cooking or prep on unit. Non-perishable sealed beverages	None	Yes
CLASS 2	Minimum 5 gallons for handwashing**	Minimum 5 gallons**	May be required*	May be required*	License \$370, Plan Review \$405, Commissary \$340	All foods permitted under Class 1, also unpackaged foods. No cooking or prep on unit.	Minimum 5 gallons of warm potable water	Yes
CLASS 3	Minimum 5 gallons for handwashing**	Minimum 5 gallons**	May be required*	May be required*	License \$370, Plan Review \$405, Commissary \$340	All foods permitted under Classes 1 and 2. No raw proteins allowed on unit.	Minimum 5 gallons of warm potable water	Yes
CLASS 4	Minimum 5 gallons for handwashing, plus amount to fill 3-compartment sinks twice over**	Minimum 5 gallons**	May be required*	Required	License \$425, Plan Review \$405, Commissary \$340	Units may serve a full menu***	Minimum 5 gallons of warm potable water	Yes

\* May be required dependent on operational considerations. Speak to the mobile unit representative at the Multnomah County Health Department for more information.  
 \*\* Dependent on operational considerations and availability of on-site potable and wastewater facilities. Speak to the mobile unit representative at the Multnomah County Health Department for more information.  
 \*\*\* Equipment and facility requirements may apply depending on what foods you wish to prepare and serve.

Image: Multnomah County Health Department, “Mobile Unit Playbook”

# CITY OF PORTLAND POLICIES

## OPENING A MOBILE FOOD UNIT IN PORTLAND, OR AS OF 2021



# CITY OF PORTLAND POLICIES

## SITE REQUIREMENTS

In the City of Portland, the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) regulates mobile food units on private property as buildings, unless they meet certain criteria to consider them an exempt vehicle. The unit must sit on a paved parking area that is zoned for retail use. BDS requires that carts are no more than 16 feet in length. The cart must have wheels, and any canopies or awnings must be supported by the cart. There are to be no plumbing connections and the unit must be self-contained. BDS requires an electrical permit, unless the unit is already completely wired. An extension cord cannot be used to connect a power source<sup>32</sup>.

All units doing business in the City of Portland must register with the Portland Revenue Bureau and acquire a business license. A business tax registration form covers the City business license tax, Multnomah County Business Income Tax, and Metro Supportive Housing Services Business Income Tax. Not all businesses are required to pay these taxes, but licensure is required to determine eligibility. The only exemptions to the business tax are for businesses that gross less than \$50,000 per year before expenses and less than \$100,000 at the County level, and businesses whose activity is regulated by the State Insurance Division<sup>33</sup>. Most food carts would not qualify for this exemption as a survey of mobile food units across the country in 2017 noted that over 85% of mobile food units grossed over \$100,000 per year<sup>34</sup>. Note that this is gross revenue, not net revenue and does not account for expenses. Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) regulates the public right-of-way within the city. If any part of the unit encroaches the right-of-way, a special permit from PBOT is required<sup>35</sup>. Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R)

has similar permitting practices for mobile food unit operation on park property<sup>36</sup>. Regulations around mobile food units on public property significantly alter the application process for a food cart owner.

## HEALTH + SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The City of Portland has specific fire code requirements for mobile food units. Fire code requirements and recommendations are regulated by Portland Fire & Rescue (PFR). If a unit is operating with propane, they are required to obtain a permit and renew it annually. Propane tanks must be placed outside of the unit. If the tank is greater than 25 gallons, a special tank permit must be obtained from the Fire Marshal's Office. Fire extinguishers are required and undergo annual servicing, and fixed fire suppression systems are recommended. If there is no fixed suppression system, a cooking vessel lid is required<sup>37</sup>.

Water and wastewater are also an important part of mobile food unit policy.

1. *Handwashing systems with plumbed hot and cold running water.*

a. *Minimum five gallons of water dedicated to handwashing*

2. *Dishwashing system with plumbed hot and cold running water.*

a. *Minimum 30 gallons of water OR twice the capacity of three compartment sink<sup>38</sup>*

3. *Wastewater and water tanks.*

a. *Wastewater tank must be 15% larger than water tank*

b. *May connect to public water and sewer if connections are available<sup>39</sup>*

4. *MCHD wastewater disposal form.*

5. *Consultation with Portland BES to determine proper greywater disposal.*

6. *Greywater Disposal.*

a. *On-site recycling container*

b. *On-site grease interceptor*

c. *Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) approved vendor for greywater removal<sup>40</sup>*

Any mobile food unit that is parked in the same location for more than two hours is required to provide a restroom. This restroom facility must have warm running water, soap, and paper towels<sup>41</sup>. MCHD requires an attached form with the mobile unit application that designates an accessible restroom facility within one-quarter mile. If storing food overnight, electricity is required to the unit at all times. If refrigeration runs throughout the night, extension cords are not as secure as a hardwire connection. However, there is no requirement to hardwire the unit. To meet mobile unit transportation standards, any hardwired units must still be easily disconnected<sup>42</sup>. Multnomah County and the City of Portland use these regulations for all mobile food units within their jurisdictions. However, the County takes a much more active role in mobile food unit policy and is usually the first point of contact for first-time mobile food unit operators and units currently in operation.



# CITY OF PORTLAND POLICIES

## REGIONAL COMPARISON

ECP briefly looked into nearby municipalities and how they approach food cart policy and permitting. It is worth noting that Portland is much larger than its neighbors, Beaverton, Gresham, and Oregon City, which are discussed below. Regional collaboration and sharing can be useful for broadening ideas around what the policy possibilities are. The City of Beaverton requires a building permit for any permanent mobile food unit. Mobile food units in Beaverton are also required to pay a Clean Water Services sanitary sewer fee, a Transportation Development Tax, and a Park sanitary sewer fee in addition to permitting fees<sup>43</sup>. In Gresham, mobile food units are permitted in any place a commercial business is allowed. Any cart on a site longer than four hours is considered permanent. There is no direct connection to water or sewer allowed. All units are exempt from land-use district density and Design District design guidelines and standards<sup>44</sup>. Oregon City requires all right-of-way considerations to be approved by the city engineer. Any permanent utility lines must be placed underground and any non-transitory carts require permanent utility connection. There are separate design standards for transitory and non-transitory mobile food units<sup>45</sup>. Other municipal jurisdictions around the Portland Metro have taken a more active role in mobile food unit policy. The main difference is that the City of Portland oversees a much larger, more diverse mobile food unit operation.

## GRESHAM FOOD CARTS POD



Image: Primo Electric

## BG FOOD CARTEL POD, BEAVERTON, OR PHOTO: WILLAMETTE WEEK

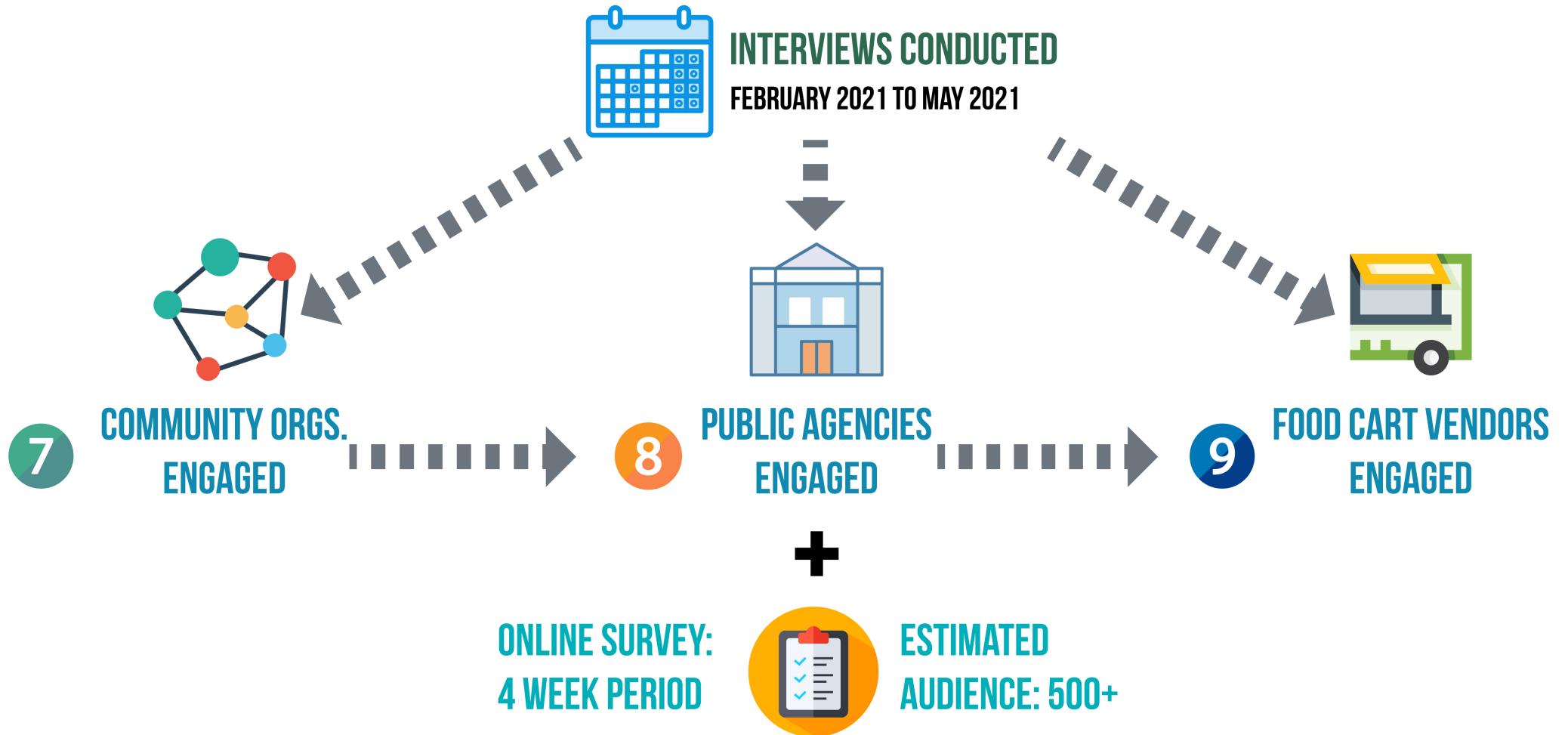






## 5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW





# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW & STRATEGY

The community engagement portion of this project took place between late February and early May, forming the bulk of project activities. During this time, we worked to engage three different stakeholder groups: Community Organizations, Food Cart Owners, and Public Agencies. The community engagement process was central to gaining a full understanding of the role of food carts in Portland's Central City and crafting holistic recommendations. The presence of mobile food units in any city has an impact on design, local economy, tourism, public perception, safety, and more. Because of this, we aimed for our engagement process to capture a variety of perspectives, with an attempt to focus on people of color who are often left out of public processes.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our engagement process, forcing us to conduct all interviews virtually, either over Zoom or the phone (as well as one interview over email). During the engagement phase, over 30 interviews were conducted across the different stakeholder groups and an online survey was distributed to mobile food unit operators through a Facebook group and an email distribution list.

We were able to meet our client twice in-person; once to do a walk-through of the food carts displaced from the Alder pod and which are temporarily housed at the USPS site, and a second time to do a walk-through of the Ankeny West site in downtown Portland where we were joined by a dozen of the displaced food cart owners. This site is where our client is actively working to provide a new opportunity for displaced carts to relocate and many of the cart owners who were present noted how eager they were to see this new pod come into

fruition. Although the conversations we had on this walk-through were informal, they were a significant part of our community engagement. During this time we were able to build some rapport and explain our project to an enthusiastic audience. Many of these cart owners were ones we later formally interviewed.

## EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

As a predominantly white team, we were cognizant of our role as student researchers and the power and privilege embedded within that. When crafting our interview plans, we aimed to meet people where they were and adapt to a more informal conversation when necessary, with the ultimate goal of increased accessibility and comfort for all. For interviews conducted with Community Organizations and Public Agencies, equity was addressed through what we talked about and the type of questions we asked to better understand how these stakeholders were interacting, supporting, and potentially hindering food cart owners, especially those from often marginalized groups.

We were able to secure interviews with all the public agencies we identified as being directly involved in the oversight of mobile food units, although not always with the individual or role that we had hoped. For example, we attempted to secure interviews with decision and policy makers at the managerial and director levels at PBOT Permitting, but were instead directed to other contacts within the agency that handled more of the day-to-day oversight. Although these interviews were informative and useful, they did not offer the same level of insights that we would have obtained from discussions with higher-ups in the agency. Interviews with Community Organizations spanned a wide range of entities, from ones with incubator programs and

food cart management to others who represent neighborhoods and the tourism industry. For interviews with Food Carts Owners, we prioritized equity by intentionally engaging a diverse group of operators, representing different ethnic and national origins, genders, scale of operations, and vendors who were active, inactive, and who were leaving the industry.

Although largely successful in collecting perspectives to broaden our understanding of the equity considerations around operating a food cart, a limitation that we encountered was not being able to go visit active food cart pods in the downtown area and engage directly with food cart owners. We relied heavily on the existing networks and relationships that our client has with food cart owners which helped identify a diverse, representative group of respondents.

This allowed for likely richer and more transparent interviews although limited our ability to have a true random sample of food carts. Another limitation was that we did not have access to interpretation services which reduced the number of food carts we could directly talk to, although in one case this was overcome by talking with the owner's daughter instead of the owner who was not English-proficient. Throughout the process, we were aware of the ways that interviews can perpetuate hierarchy, and aimed to build camaraderie with our interviewees as much as possible.

Conducting interviews over Zoom and the phone allowed us to be able to talk to food cart owners while they were at work, rather than expecting them to find time outside of work to meet with us. This allowed for more people to participate because they didn't have to worry about leaving their workplace unattended or losing revenue to participate

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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in our interview process. We also adapted how we interviewed, based on what food cart owners needed. For example, one cart owner only had a half hour available rather than an hour, and another cart owner preferred to answer through email due to time constraints. We were flexible and willing to adjust our own expectations to be able to hear from more people. Lastly, it was important to be able to offer compensation to the food cart owners we interviewed to thank them for their time. We were able to offer a \$20 Fred Meyer gift card to each food cart owner which was funded by Portland State University.

## KEY ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

Through our engagement with these different stakeholder groups (interested organizations, food cart vendors, and public agencies), we found the following themes to be prevalent, and they should be prioritized when making recommendations. More details from each stakeholder group are unpacked below these high-level observations.

### 1. FOOD CARTS ARE A CRUCIAL ASPECT OF PORTLAND'S ECONOMY AND CHARACTER, AND NEED TO BE INTENTIONALLY CONSIDERED DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS

*-The disconnect between City staff and food cart owners was apparent in interviews with both stakeholder groups, and relationships between the two must be cultivated in culturally-relevant and appropriate ways-*

It is essential to center the needs of food cart owners when planning for food carts in Portland. This should include planning on a large scale, such as periodic comprehensive plans, and in smaller scale planning, such as site development or corridor visioning. It is important to remember that though regulations can be important to providing structure and guidance, overly burdensome requirements can have a negative financial impact on small businesses, especially immigrant and people of color business owners. The autonomy that comes with owning and operating a food cart is an important part of what makes them different from a brick-and-mortar.

Too many regulations can interrupt the autonomy that inspired vendors to enter the industry. Positive relationships between the City and food carts are critical to the longstanding viability of food carts operating in the downtown, Central City, and metro areas and hinge on strong relationships, access to resources and story sharing.

### 2. BUREAUCRACY AND GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE ARE SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION

We heard multiple times about the challenges related to Portland's commissioner-style of government. The main challenge that appeared to be present was the siloing of bureaus under individual commissioners making cross-bureau communication and co-bureau decisions quite complex due to the channels of communication having to go up and down rather than directly across bureaus. Additionally, as commissioners are term-serving, there is often a change of priorities when new leadership takes over meaning some elements are dropped

while others are taken on. Though this structure will not change overnight, there are ways to work within it and increase cross-bureau collaboration. Food cart owners were largely unaware that the City could be helpful in providing them with resources, and they mostly associate the City with enforcement. The traumatic relocation from the Alder Street pod has left many distrustful of the City because although they were not directly responsible for the development, they did not provide much support or protection for the food cart owners. This makes it all the more important for public bureaus and city commissioners to distinguish themselves and become known to food cart operators.

We also heard from PBOT Permitting that the current iterations of city code make it nearly impossible to integrate food carts into the right-of-way or to integrate food trucks at all. This highlights the importance of understanding the intention behind the code, and advocating for that, rather than religiously following code. Reengaging food cart owners to collaboratively discuss ways to move forward will be paramount to setting equitable precedents. For the City, discussions around how to address issues that intersect the jurisdiction of multiple bureaus will provide clarity for outsiders on where to go and who to ask for assistance.

### 3. THERE IS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR FOOD CART SUCCESS IN PORTLAND, BUT CONVERSATIONS AND STORY-SHARING ARE NECESSARY

In our interviews we heard how organizations, vendors, and public agencies each relate to the food cart industry and benefits, either directly or indirectly, from its success. For organizations that support

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

food carts, they get to engage in collaborative problem-solving and celebrate the successes of food cart businesses while making their city a better place. Being slightly removed can help them advocate for food carts in ways that owners themselves may be unable to. Public agencies want to see food carts succeed as this leads to increased tourism, economic activity, and vibrant place-making throughout the city although some respondents did express hesitations about pushing policy or permitting changes too quickly. For example, Prosper Portland spoke to their perspective on city planning being long-term, whereas business owners, such as food carts, need to be more focused on near-term revenue generation to remain in business resulting in different priorities. Food cart owners naturally want to see their businesses succeed, and they may be closer to sustainable success if they can access resources through the city. Additionally, they can be the hallmarks of economic resilience and recovery as seen following

the 2008 recession but also rely on a conducive and supportive environment provided by the City for their businesses to thrive. These aspects highlight the importance of relationships and conversations between the different stakeholder groups as their interests are all interconnected.

## ENGAGEMENT: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

ECP began the engagement process by interviewing a variety of organizations that intersected with the Portland food cart world. Organizations (including neighborhood associations, nonprofits, and community-based organizations), have a unique relationship with food carts. They often operate adjacent to food carts rather than directly with them, creating opportunity to support them and build capacity; not from a place of obligation, but from a place of mutual benefit. Often,

### LIST OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

ORGANIZATION	ROLE
HACIENDA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CDC)	Hacienda manages Portland Mercado, a business incubator site which houses nine food carts and six indoor businesses meant to provide affordable space for businesses that celebrate Latino culture to start and grow.
OREGON MOBILE FOOD ASSOCIATION (OMFA)	OMFA connects, supports, and advocates for mobile food vendors. Its purpose is to be a common place to unify vendors to support each other, discuss challenges, and share resources.
TRAVEL PORTLAND	Travel Portland is one of the main hubs of information for tourists to learn everything about where to go and what to do in Portland. Their website contains a 'Food Cart Finder' where people can browse food carts and filter by cuisine, proximity to them, and dietary preferences.
AFORMA	Aforma is a design company whose founder serves on an advisory board for the Bureau of Development Services. He is involved with policy and neighborhood change and particularly interested in the structural challenges of opening food carts in the right-of-way.
PIONEER SQUARE MANAGEMENT	Pioneer Square Management manages several food carts at Pioneer Square - a hard-surfaced plaza in downtown Portland. These carts are heavily curated with design specifications, but receive significant support through plaza's management. They represent a unique intersection between the public realm (Pioneer Square is technically a public park) and private management.
PORTLAND PARKS FOUNDATION (PPF)	This private foundation advocates for community-oriented parks and public spaces that are accessible, spark creativity and inspire play. Changes to the right-of-way to incorporate food carts would intersect with the work of PPF, and likely contribute to their mission.
PORTLAND DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (PDNA)	The PDNA is a group of downtown residents, business owners, employees, and students that has been meeting in some capacity since 1977 to mobilize and provide public input to city bureaus on changes that affect the downtown area. Development changes can impact food carts, business owners, and residents alike.



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food carts will border or share space with businesses and it is in the best interest of both to collaborate. We spoke with representatives from seven organizations that intersect with the food cart world in Portland. These organizations were chosen to be interviewed first as they were easier to organize and provided additional context on the role of food carts in Portland, before the team spoke with food cart owners or public agencies. The key question for this group of stakeholders was asking them to explain how their organization intersected with food carts, how they supported food carts, and what recommendations they might suggest. These organizations represented a variety of perspectives, including park preservation, small business development, neighborhood atmosphere, and tourism which is emblematic of the wide impact that food carts have in Portland.

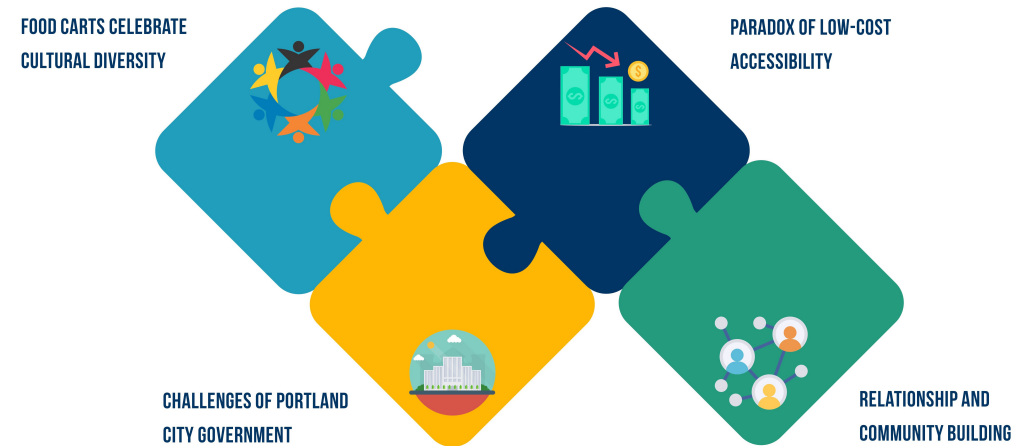
They also varied greatly in terms of proximity to the food cart world with some, such as Hacienda CDC, working directly with food cart operators at the Portland Mercado and others, such as Portland Parks Foundation, envisioning uses for public space that may be adaptable to hosting food carts but rarely engaging directly with food carts. Speaking with this diverse group of organizations was helpful in expanding the understanding of the energy and momentum behind food carts in Portland, the challenges that they face, and the existing networks providing support.

## PORTLAND MERCADO



Photo: Bremik Construction

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: IDENTIFIED THEMES



Attempts were made to contact City Center Parking (which managed the Alder Street Pod) and the Portland Business Alliance (which advocates for business and oversees the Clean & Safe program in the downtown area) for their input and perspectives, but neither organization replied to our requests. We also attempted to contact the managers of other food cart pods, but were unsuccessful in setting up interviews during our tight timeframe.

Overall, these interviews revealed community mobilization and support around food carts as opportunities, and most interviewees had a positive view on the expansion of food carts. However, the focus on the positive 'feel' of food carts meant that a lot of the structural challenges around accessing utilities were unknown to community groups. Public agencies and food cart owners tended to be more clued into the structural and logistical challenges of integrating food carts than these community organizations, especially in the right-of-way.

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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## FOOD CARTS CELEBRATE CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Portland's food cart scene represents a diversity of cuisines, ethnic origins, and flavors. Organizations that overlap with the food cart world play a role in supporting and celebrating that diversity. For example, Travel Portland's 'Food Cart Finder' tool is an online resource that highlights the variety of food carts that exist in Portland. Travel Portland took the opportunity to create this tool in the early days of the pandemic when food carts were clearly struggling and a tool like this didn't exist.

Organizations like this are able to fill in the gaps when support from public agencies is moving slowly, and the Food Cart Finder is a testament to that. Community Organizations like the Portland Mercado pod, provide support and programming for food carts that are specific to the cultures represented in that community. Aldo Medina of Hacienda CDC, which oversees the Mercado pod, explained that it aims to "push back on stereotypes and highlight more Latin American cultures."

Mercado hosts special events to draw people in and assists vendors with intentional marketing strategies, something that can be a challenge for immigrant vendors who may not be experienced in outreach efforts or branding for their business - especially over social media. Jennifer Polver of Pioneer Square Management described food carts as, "a great way to show cultural diversity that is sometimes hard to find." This reflects the general sentiment expressed by all the Community Organizations that we interviewed which acknowledges that food cart pods can be powerful representations and a celebration of diversity for the city. Although not all these organizations directly support food carts through their programming, they were all sup-

portive of the role of food carts in the city and do not want to see them displaced or shut down.

## CHALLENGES OF PORTLAND CITY GOVERNMENT

People and organizations outside of local government appeared to be frustrated and confused that food cart expansion can garner widespread support, but still remain stagnant on a policy level. These organizations discussed the challenges that they face when working through bureaucratic procedures and highlighted how these can trickle down to impact food cart owners. Several interviewees discussed examples of ongoing challenges of obtaining permits to operate in the ROW or public spaces, such as along the Green Loop to make a "Culinary Corridor". Others noted how "citizen involvement creates political pressure" and organizing food cart advocates to speak up might be one strategy for removing stagnation when political support is not enough. Additionally, several of these organizations observed that it can be challenging to engage and understand the structure of the local government.

One respondent said "It's a challenge to have multiple elected officials involved in agencies that need to work together on a given issue." For food cart owners and those working with them, understanding which agencies are involved in permitting, policy and inspections can be quite confusing. This is compounded by the complexity of the commissioner-style form of government with different elected officials overseeing different bureaus and regularly changing.

On the other hand, Aldo Medina from Hacienda CDC described the collaborative relationship that the Mercado has with Multnomah County

Health Department: as cultural challenges come up around what is deemed safe and sanitary, the County has been willing to listen and form solutions that preserve the integrity of the food and culture without compromising health and safety at the Mercado. The Health Department also has Spanish-speaking staff available to answer questions, which streamlines the transfer of information. Although this collaborative relationship is notable, it does reflect the need for advocates (such as Mercado) and personal rapport-building to navigate the city's governmental structure - something that some food cart owners may find intimidating, especially if language is a barrier. Even if organizations aren't able to pinpoint exactly where the problems lie, there is consensus that the government should be able to move supportive food cart policies along more swiftly.

## PARADOX OF LOW-COST ACCESSIBILITY

A common assumption about starting a food cart business is that they have low cost of entry and while many of our interview respondents did note this to be true, at least compared to trying to start a brick-and-mortar restaurant, there was a general sentiment that costs have been steadily increasing. Medina from Hacienda CDC estimated that the start-up costs for a cart at the Portland Mercado to be about \$12,000.00 (not including the cost of the cart itself, which the Mercado provides), and this cost includes permits, the first three months' rent, insurance, and a part-time worker. However this is significantly lower than elsewhere as it is a business incubator site with supportive funding and resources. During engagement with food cart owners and discussions with our client it became clear that the cost of the cart alone can range between \$20,000.00 and \$40,000.00, not including all the



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

other start-up costs. Additionally, renting spots on private lots often costs into the thousands of dollars per month. Furthermore, Medina and others noted that food carts tend to be low profit margin businesses with owners dedicating 12+ hours a day to run their business for relatively small profits. For those not fortunate enough to start their business through the Mercado program they have to resort to self-funding their start-up costs. This can range from personal savings, friends and family assistance, or small business loans through nonprofits like Miso, or general community lending. Most organizations we talked to were not aware of direct financial support for food cart businesses from public agencies, with the closest connection being access to loans through nonprofits that are funded by Prosper Portland.

**“FOOD CARTS ARE ONE OF THE MOST ACCESSIBLE ENTRY WAYS FOR IMMIGRANTS TO START A BUSINESS, BUT THE COST TO ENTER HAS INCREASED.”**

**- ALDO MEDINA, HACIENDA CDC**

## RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Several interviewees spoke to the opportunity that food carts provide to immigrants and non-native English speakers. The process toward getting started can take just a few weeks. Many new cart owners purchase existing carts that are already in a pod or designated spot, which also makes the process simpler. Language, Medina stated, can also be a huge accessibility challenge. He emphasized how scary it can be for an immigrant business owner to get a letter from the government that they don't understand. In addition to language accessibility for business owners, there is also an accessibility challenge for tourists who come to visit Portland to experience the food cart scene.

Many foreign tourists come to Portland for the food scene but may find navigating the different carts and pods challenging as most signage is in English. Richard Tammar, from Travel Portland, discussed how he and his staff are unable to produce translated materials when engaging with food cart owners and how this is a limitation for building out the food cart finder database. This can be a challenge for tourists looking for certain cuisines, but also for food cart owners to read about and connect with other carts to build community. Once in the business, operating a food cart can also be isolating. Most food carts are operated directly by the owners because of budget constraints and limited physical space.

In turn, the community amongst staff you might find at a brick-and-mortar restaurant is not present. Leah Tucker, from OMFA, spoke to the gap that her organization is filling in terms of access to assistance, advice, and information between cart owners. Once in the OMFA, members have access to a community of fellow cart owners, and to Tucker herself, where they can crowdsource some of their questions and concerns. This has transformed the food cart industry, and is a testament to the benefits of building out more pods that prioritize relationships between carts and management, rather than separated structures operating in isolation. It is one thing to have the access to get into the business. Once there, it is important for cart owners to have access to information that will help them sustain their businesses. Organizations play a huge role in building capacity for this continued accessibility but are often restricted by funding challenges and language barriers when trying to connect with food cart owners.

## CARTOPIA FOOD CART POD



*Image: The Society Hotel*



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## ENGAGEMENT: FOOD CART OWNERS

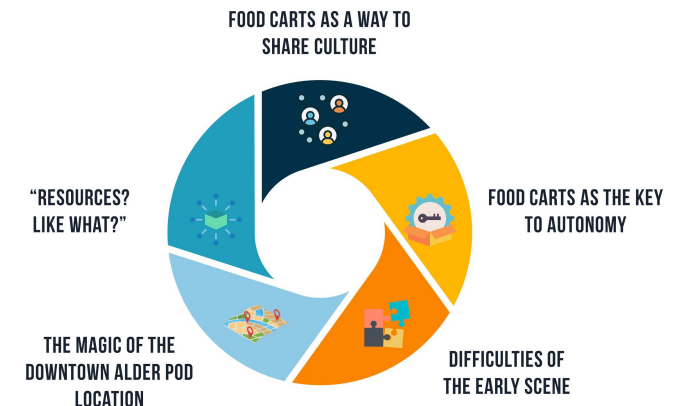
The second phase of engagement involved conducting one-on-one interviews with food cart owners. Initially, ECP was planning to engage food cart owners through the use of focus groups, which would have allowed ECP to reach more vendors and potentially foster an environment where they could build off each other's perspectives. However, between the limited timeframe, global pandemic, and finding a suitable location this approach was modified to be conducted via one-one-one interviews with a more focused group of food cart owners. Food cart vendors (including both owners and operators) have crucial insights about the barriers of opening and running food carts, as well as the opportunities and rewards associated with the food cart business model. In-depth engagement with food cart owners was essential to this project, in line with the philosophy of "Nothing About Us, Without Us." Thus, engagement with this group was essential to an equitable approach to this project.

All of these cart owners had, at some point, operated at the Alder Street pod before being displaced in 2019 by the land being developed for a luxury hotel. Some of these carts were able to relocate and are still operating at other sites throughout the city while others remain in limbo since being displaced and are yet to reopen. Although all the carts had ties to the Alder Street Pod and the Downtown neighborhood, they represented a diverse group of food carts. Most of the cart owners interviewed were people of color, and represented a variety of cuisines, including Korean, Ethiopian, Syrian, American and Chinese. Some operated multiple units and relied on a high-volume production model, and some had just one cart and focused on branding.

Though many were non-native English speakers, interpretation services were not necessary. The purpose of these interviews was to understand the stories behind these businesses, what services cart owners utilized in operating their businesses, and what were the most prominent challenges that they faced. Food cart owners were sent a \$20 Fred Meyer gift card, funded by PSU's College of Urban & Public Affairs, after the interview as a compensation for their time.

The food cart vendors that participated were enthusiastic about the opportunity to share their experiences, successes, and concerns leading to fruitful and informative interviews. They ultimately reflected a shared passion for the food cart business model and a sense of pride about their role in placemaking in Portland. The interviews also revealed varying degrees of frustration toward the City of Portland for their perceived inaction and lack of support.

## FOOD CART OWNER INTERVIEWS: IDENTIFIED THEMES



## LIST OF FOOD CART OWNER INTERVIEWS

OWNER	STILL IN OPERATION	CURRENT LOCATION
MAHMOUD ZERIEK, OWNER OF KAFTA HOUSE	NO	POD IN STORAGE AT USPS SITE
SOLOMON TEFERA, OWNER OF EMAME'S ETHIOPIAN CUISINE	NO	POD IN STORAGE AT USPS SITE
BAILUN SUN, OWNER OF BOOM CREPES	YES	WASHINGTON SQUARE MALL
MATT BRESLOW, OWNER OF GRILLED CHEESE GRILL	NO	SOLD CART
TALI OVADIA, OWNER OF WHOLE BOWL	YES	PIONEER SQUARE POD
JACKY REN, OWNER OF BING MI	YES	1845 NW 23RD PLACE
JANE KIM, OWNER OF #1 BENTO	NO	POD IN STORAGE AT USPS SITE
SABRINA ZHANG, OWNER OF BAO BAO	YES	COUCH ST. BRICK AND MORTAR
LILY CHEN, DAUGHTER OF QUING YI CHEN, OWNER OF HUA LI HOUSE	NO	POD IN STORAGE AT USPS SITE

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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## FOOD CARTS AS A WAY TO SHARE CULTURE

Many of the vendor interviewees expressed a collective perspective that their carts provided the opportunity to share their culture through food with Portlanders and tourists alike, and that food carts were (to them) the easiest way to access this opportunity due to their low start-up costs. Lily Chen, daughter of the owners of the Thai food cart Hua Li House, said that her parents opened the cart in 2017 because they wanted to share their culture with Portland, and are excited to continue doing so once they find a new location to operate.

Jacky Ren, owner of Bing Mi, makes authentic Chinese street food that he and his partners learned to make from watching Chinese YouTube videos. Solomon Tefera of Emame's Ethiopian Cuisine was proud to tell us that he makes very good Ethiopian food, and boldly claimed it as the only authentic Ethiopian food in Portland. Sabrina Zhang of Bao Bao noted that while there was plenty of Chinese food available locally, there weren't any baozi (steam buns). The low start-up costs of the food cart allowed her to open her own business specializing in steam buns.

Interviewees said they also especially loved the diversity of customers who visited the Alder pod; the busy downtown area brought in local workers as well as international tourists who were enthusiastic about the authenticity of the food and the multidimensional experience.

## FOOD CARTS AS THE KEY TO AUTONOMY

Food carts also provide owners independence and autonomy in a local economy where immigrants are often relegated to lower-paying positions, and those without investors or institutional funding often cannot open their own business. Jane Kim, owner of #1 Bento (which she operates with her husband), explained that she had previously owned a restaurant in Lake Oswego, but the rent was too high to make a profit. They sold the restaurant, and her husband went to work as a sushi chef. She said, "We are used to working for ourselves, so going to work for someone else... Even though we ran the business for them, the owners didn't appreciate it. When someone appreciates you, you are willing to work harder."

Owning a food cart provided autonomy for the vendors we interviewed. Many displaced cart owners are currently working in other industries while they wait for the displaced food carts to be approved at a new location, and there was a palpable sense of impatience as they wait for the ability to run their businesses

again. Most interviewees also expressed that they are able to support themselves and their families financially solely from their food cart, whether they had multiple carts or just one, despite the fact that they are low profit margin businesses.

**"IT WAS ALWAYS MY FATHER'S DREAM TO RUN A SMALL BUSINESS WHERE HE COULD MAKE HIS FAVORITE DISHES FROM HOME TO SHARE WITH OTHERS."**

**- LILY CHEN, DAUGHTER OF OWNERS OF HUA LI HOUSE**

## DIFFICULTIES OF THE EARLY SCENE

We opened our interviews with the question "Can you tell us the brief story of your food cart business?" While this question prompted many of the details highlighted in the prior themes discussed, it also led many of our interviewees to describe the early food cart scene in Portland (for those who had been in operation since then, which most had). From 2007 to 2009, a small number of food carts were opening up sporadically around Portland. The scattered nature of this development, as well as the specificity of carts themselves (as opposed to other types of mobile food units), meant that the City of Portland did not have measures in place for regulating this new industry. While this local history is explored in the Existing Conditions section, it was much richer coming from our vendor interviewees who experienced it firsthand. There were dual consequences to this lack of regulation: many new vendors felt a freedom in the lack of oversight, which provided the ability to be creative and to do so affordably; however, vendors were also worried about the future legality of decisions they were making while also frustrated about the absence of information and resources. One interviewee aptly likened this chapter of the early food cart scene in Portland to the Wild West: "You could get away with whatever you wanted until you couldn't."<sup>46</sup>

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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**“WHEN THE GOODMANS, WHO OWNED THE ALDER PARKING LOT, DECIDED TO GET MORE CARTS, THEY DIDN'T UPDATE THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE. IT WAS NOT SET UP FOR 40 CARTS. SOMETIMES SOMEONE WOULD UNSCREW YOUR HOSE BECAUSE THEY NEEDED MORE PRESSURE, OR THE BREAKER WOULD GO OUT RANDOMLY. THAT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BIG PODS, AND A LOT HAS BEEN LEARNED SINCE THEN.”**

**- TALI OVADIA, OWNER OF WHOLE BOWL**

The early food cart scene in Portland also had relatively few options for food cart purchasing options. Carts were not as easily available for purchase as they are now, because there simply was not enough of a demand. Many vendors purchased used carts that they found via word of mouth and the few carts that were available were not uniform.

This, combined with lack of regulation, meant that many food carts were customized, aka the “Do-It-Yourself Cart.” It is these early, non-uniform carts coupled with a culture of customization that has led to many of the logistical hurdles and design inconsistencies now facing pods today.

Utility access and sanitation were also major concerns of the early food cart scene, though these concerns are still contemporarily relevant. Even with long-standing pods like SW 10th and Alder, cleanliness was a concern. Solomon Tefera, owner of Emame's Ethiopian, would often hear customer

complaints about cleanliness, some even sighting rats. Tali Ovadia, the owner of Whole Bowl, said that the “utility end of things was very challenging at Alder, but not at Pioneer Square.” Sabrina Zhang of Bao Bao described how when she opened her first cart at the Alder pod, there was no water or sewer for her to use, so she used the tap from the parking lot.

There was a consistent desire amongst vendors for pods to provide central and accessible utilities, sanitation services, and increased security (vandalization was a consistent stressor in both the early scene and today, as well).

## **THE MAGIC OF THE DOWNTOWN ALDER POD & THE DEVASTATION OF DEVELOPMENT**

Nearly every vendor interview conducted emphasized the singular importance of location to the success of their business, and no location could beat the downtown pod at SW 10th and Alder. For those who purchased a cart that was already in the Alder pod, they had a built-in clientele. Even with the issues of utility access, sanitation, and security discussed earlier, Alder was a special place culturally and a lucrative location financially.

For many, opening anywhere else just wouldn't be adequate. Mahmoud Zeriek of Kafta House said he looked for other locations after being displaced, but nowhere else would have been sufficient. Bailun Sun of Boom Crepes said location was his biggest concern when opening, and that Alder was worth the waitlist and high purchase price because of the foot traffic and notoriety.

Matt Breslow, owner of Grilled Cheese Grill and one of the earliest food truck entrepreneurs in Portland, relocated his Alder pod cart just seven blocks away to another downtown pod, and the decrease in business was dramatic. He expressed concern that even the Ankeny West location is “too far off the beaten path” to achieve the clientele that the Alder pod historically received.

Jacky Ren of Bing Mi reopened on NW 23rd, and business was slow to start (although it has been improving in recent months because of local tourism and traffic from hikers in Washington Park). Jane Kim of #1 Bento, who has another cart that is doing well enough, expressed nostalgia for the Alder pod not only because of the high volume of customers it provided, but because it was a central meeting place for tourists from all over the world. Solomon Tefera similarly expressed that he enjoyed the diversity of customers as well as businesses, and that made leaving that location especially hard.

The timing of the displacement in summer 2019 was also difficult as progress that had been made in finding alternative downtown spots came to a standstill in early 2020 with the global pandemic. Although most food cart owners stated that they missed the Alder Pod, the ones that were less nostalgic were those that had other carts already in operation at the time of displacement, such as Tali Ovadia who has several other Whole Bowl locations that have been able to continue operating throughout the pandemic, including one at Pioneer Square (although several other sites have temporarily closed).



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

**“WHAT I LEARNED FROM MOVING SEVEN BLOCKS AWAY: AT 10TH AND WASHINGTON, THERE WAS SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT THIS FOUR-SIDED CITY BLOCK NEAR POWELL’S AND TARGET. SEVEN BLOCKS AWAY FROM MAGIC IS NOT MAGIC.”**

**- MATT BRESLOW, OWNER OF GRILLED CHEESE GRILL**

## **“RESOURCES? LIKE WHAT?”**

We asked the interviewees first “Have there been any public or community resources that have been helpful for you?” followed by “Are there any food cart assistance or resources from the City or community that you would want to see more of?” Generally, none of the interviewees had taken advantage of any supportive resources nor could they share potential resources because they were unaware any existed.

This reflected the reality we observed after discussing with public agencies what resources they had that might help food cart owners. Unfortunately, there were very few resources available. Small business loans from Prosper Portland were designed for slightly larger businesses, and food carts that net less than \$50,000 a year fall through the cracks. Some bureaus offered limited technical assistance or modified permits to facilitate access, but most food cart owners seemed unaware of these options, although one noted he received a reduced licensing fee when he first applied as it was his first license request. When we asked if they had any resources in mind that they would like to see, some had concrete suggestions.

However, most of the suggestions were centered around pod management rather than public assistance reflecting the priorities of food cart owners. Their suggestions included:

- *Grants for those displaced from the Alder pod and/or impacted by COVID-19*

- *Increased security and safety measures*

- *Better sanitation services for pods*

- *The ability to cater small events as right now they can only do so from a commercial or commissary kitchen and not from their cart*

- *Easier licensing procedure (specifically, a singular license that is valid statewide, as opposed to getting local licenses for locations you may only be going to for a one-time event)*

- *A public loan program specifically for food cart start-up costs*

- *A central, online location for information about food carts from the community itself (particularly for buying and selling of used carts)*

Some of these suggestions, though, only came after clarification about what we were asking. Even after reiterating our question, several of our interviewees did not have an answer, seemingly because they were unaware there could possibly be resources available to assist them. They were unable to brainstorm about what they would want. One respondent, meanwhile, did not seem to think it was worth the effort of suggesting potential public

assistance or resources, because food cart owners had already been abandoned by the City of Portland: “The City has nothing to offer us. Permits came so quick for 10th and Alder; a meeting and six months later they already had permits for the hotel, and some of us were very upset. They had no consideration for people like us, 300 people almost out of jobs. They don’t care about us. The City doesn’t care and doesn’t do anything for us.”

While it is important to incorporate all of the themes gathered in our interviews with food cart vendors in future decision making, it is of particular importance to respond to the fact that food cart vendors either do not trust the City, or do not view the City as a potential resource for various forms of assistance.

**“I’VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT RESOURCES WOULD BE USEFUL - THAT WOULD BE A GOOD QUESTION FOR MY WIFE.”**

**- SOLOMON TEFERA,  
OWNER OF EMAME’S ETHIOPIAN**

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## ENGAGEMENT: PUBLIC AGENCIES

The third component of the engagement plan was to conduct interviews with bureaus representing the City of Portland and Multnomah County. This stakeholder group was last to be approached because ECP wanted to have a stronger understanding of needs and experiences of food cart owners and what resources they felt were available to them before engaging directly with policymakers. Portland holds a unique position as one of the few cities where a type of mobile

food unit (food carts) do not need to leave their place of business overnight nor be attached to a commissary kitchen in order to operate. This is because food cart owners have traditionally been active only on private, surface parking lots with very little direct oversight from, or interaction with, city agencies. Besides an initial business permit and a health inspection, carts on these private lots only hear from city agencies for periodic compliance updates, or for health and safety violations and enforcement issues. In the majority of the interviews there were at least two staff members from the bureau present. The purpose of these

### LIST OF PUBLIC AGENCY INTERVIEWS

BUREAU	RESPONSIBILITY	WEBSITE
PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION (PBOT)	PBOT is responsible for the development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in the city as well as the parking infrastructure on public rights of way. PBOT is critically involved regarding the discussion of food carts operating in streets or on sidewalks.	<a href="https://www.portland.gov/transportation">https://www.portland.gov/transportation</a>
PORTLAND BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (BDS)	The Bureau of Development Services reviews land use and development applications and enforces compliance with the City and State Code. BDS is relevant to food carts as private lots where food carts operate are being assessed for development.	<a href="https://www.portland.gov/bds/about-development-services">https://www.portland.gov/bds/about-development-services</a>
PORTLAND BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY CENTRAL CITY (BPSCC)	BPS Central City manages comprehensive land use planning as well as economic development and urban design practices in the downtown area. This includes the development and implementation of the Central City 2035 Plan and the Climate Action Plan. BPS engages with food carts through the planning process as it strategizes over land use and economic activities and policies throughout the city, including recovery.	<a href="https://www.portland.gov/bps/about-bps">https://www.portland.gov/bps/about-bps</a>
PORTLAND BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (BES)	Portland BES is responsible for the management of Portland's wastewater and stormwater infrastructure to protect public health and mitigate environmental degradation. BES engages with food carts regarding their wastewater and greywater management.	<a href="https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/31000">https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/31000</a>
PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION (PPR)	Responsible for public spaces such as parks, plazas, and natural spaces to provide safe places for physical, mental, and social activities. PPR engages with food carts around the discussions of operating in public spaces like parks and plazas.	<a href="https://www.portland.gov/parks/about">https://www.portland.gov/parks/about</a>
PROSPER PORTLAND (PP)	Prosper Portland is the economic and urban development agency for the city of Portland. This includes the distribution of loans and grants, ownership of land and properties, and supporting economic and community development projects throughout the region. Prosper engages with food carts peripherally through grants distributed via nonprofits and potentially via site ownership as they own several undeveloped properties downtown. Prosper also is actively involved in economic relief and stabilization activities that may involve food carts.	<a href="https://prosperportland.us/about-us/">https://prosperportland.us/about-us/</a>
PORTLAND MAYOR'S OFFICE (PMO)	The mayor's office is comprised of staff that help implement the mayor's policy and regulatory plans. ECP met with staff in the office in order to understand the perspective of the elected officials in Portland's city government. The PMO helps orient the city's priorities and is focused on police reform, addressing houselessness, economic recovery and livability of the city - all areas that overlap to some extent with food cart operations.	<a href="https://www.portland.gov/wheeler">https://www.portland.gov/wheeler</a>
MULTNOMAH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (MCHD)	Responsible for health considerations throughout the county, and in particular oversees permitting, regulations, and inspections for food vendors.	<a href="https://multco.us/health/about-health-department">https://multco.us/health/about-health-department</a>

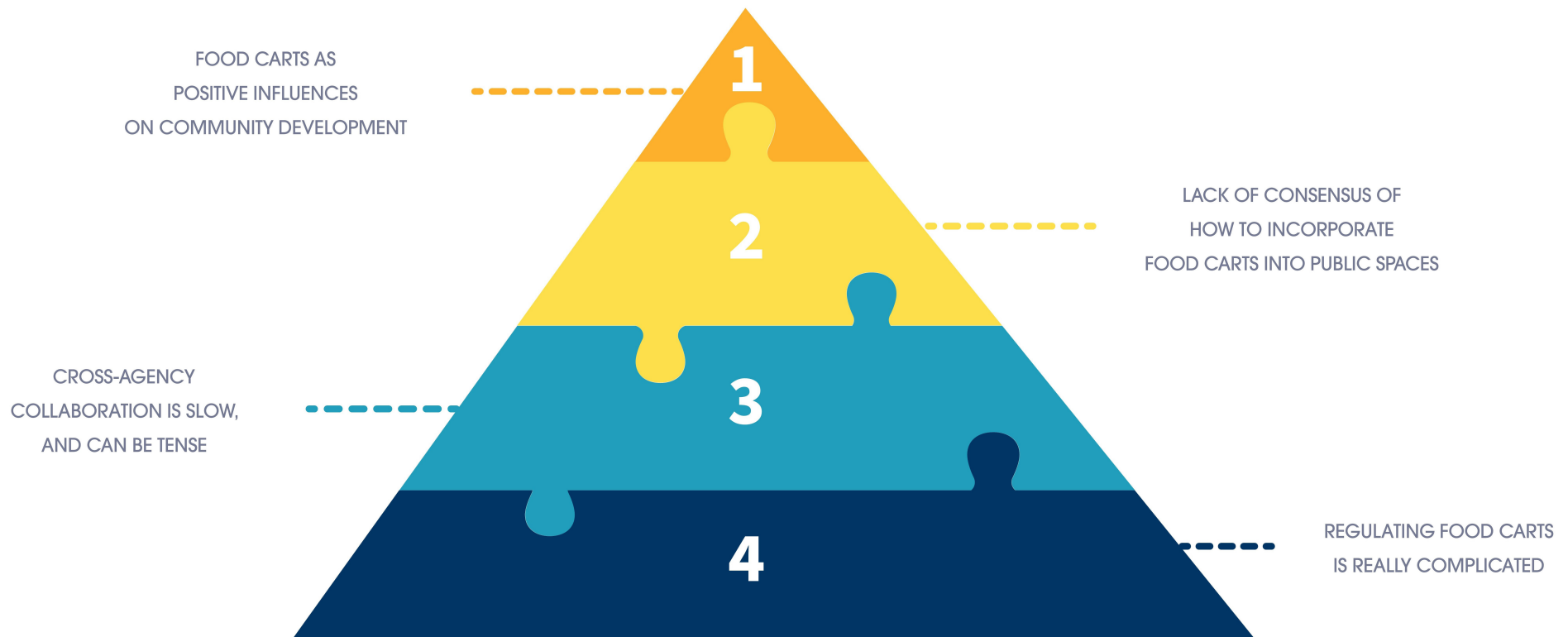
## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

interviews was to understand each bureau's future visions for their work and role in the city and how food carts might fit into those visions. It also provided clarity and context to the perspectives held by bureaus regarding the challenges and opportunities around introducing food carts into the right of way. ECP spoke with representatives from 8 different bureaus, agencies, and departments to gain an understanding of how they engaged with the mobile food vending industry and their perspectives on the future of food carts in the Central City. These interviews brought clarity to the perspectives that each agency has on the role of food carts

in the city. While there was some consensus about the opportunities and assets that food carts bring to the city, Portland's agencies have differing opinions on what the future of food carts will look like, especially in the Central City.

**-It is important to note that ECP was unable to schedule an interview with anyone from PBOT Permitting and Management, which was limiting. In the future, the permitting perspective at the decision-making level is essential when it comes to making any changes to food cart policy-**

## PUBLIC AGENCIES: IDENTIFIED THEMES





# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## FOOD CARTS AS POSITIVE INFLUENCES ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Almost all bureaus agreed that one of the most important and positive aspects of food carts was the low barrier to entry this type of business offered for entrepreneurs to get into the food industry due to relatively low start-up costs. They are an excellent entry point for individuals who either do not have the financing or the experience to open a brick-and-mortar restaurant. This makes food cart businesses an especially appealing entrepreneurial opportunity for immigrant and people of color individuals. Prosper Portland noted how food carts also act as active uses at street-level on what would otherwise be a surface parking lot. When integrated into the streetscape, food carts are a restaurant turned inside out. They activate the street and create a community anchor and gathering space. They bring life and interest to the street in a way that ground-floor retail or restaurants can't without much more significant investment. This can also be an indication of future redevelopment as the area becomes more activated and interesting from the food carts, the site begins to look more appealing for brick-and-mortar development.

**“FOOD CARTS ARE A GREAT PLACE-MAKING ELEMENT. THEY MAKE PORTLAND A UNIQUE AND GREAT DESTINATION AND OFFER A LOW BARRIER TO ACCESS, ESPECIALLY FOR IMMIGRANTS AND BIPOC INDIVIDUALS.”**

- PPR

Food carts offer an affordable option for food consumers in areas that may be considered food deserts and, when they are located in pods, they offer an incredible diversity of food and play a role in place-making. In the Central City, food carts also operate as a part of the tourism industry. Travel Portland spends a significant amount of time advertising the food cart pods downtown and hear frequently that many of the hotels downtown like having the food carts in close proximity. Portland's food scene is unique in that it has many small actors, and people travel to Portland specifically for food carts. They also provide “eyes on the street” making areas where they operate feel more welcoming and safe.

**“FOOD CARTS TURN A RESTAURANT INSIDE OUT. VERY EFFECTIVE FOR BRINGING LIFE INTO STREETS.”**

- PBOT

## LACK OF CONSENSUS OF HOW TO INCORPORATE FOOD CARTS INTO PUBLIC SPACES

The discussion around food carts entering the right of way has been contentious over the past few years among Portland bureaus. With no other examples of semi-permanent microbusinesses using right of way space for operations in other cities, Portland would be the first to incorporate food carts into the right of way. However, the transition from surface parking lots to on-street parking is not as intuitive or straightforward as it may seem. Both supporters and detractors of the idea have

strong opinions and questions about its efficacy. “It's going to be another 15-20 years before all of the surface lots are redeveloped, but where are we going to allow the food carts to be? We have to find out how to put them in the ROW, even if it is more complicated” (BPSCC). This same pro-street sentiment was expressed by PBOT Planning, with an acknowledgement that there are significant barriers to actually implementing it. One of the biggest issues with carts is that they need external utility access, which requires infrastructure like water, electricity, and wastewater. For some agencies, this makes food trucks, food units that are completely self-contained and non-permanent, a more appealing option. Trucks can come with their own issues, namely that they generally can only operate for up to 4-hours at a time and require a commissary kitchen in order to prepare most of their products. Trucks also have significantly more restrictions on the types of foods that they can prepare due to the reduced infrastructure that can be built into them. At the time of this report, food trucks can only operate under very specific criteria in downtown Portland, making it impractical for them to do so.

Regulating food carts on public property, whether that property is a street, a park, or another public space, involves one or more agencies that have regulations set up to handle very different land use requests. Almost none of them have specific regulations for addressing food carts. Additionally, since there are no standardized dimensions for food carts, it is difficult to design streets and spaces to incorporate carts. Standardization can be helpful, and it is important to still allow for the creativity and “do-it-yourself” aesthetic that people love about food carts. There is also an equity consideration

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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when the City requires a certain type of cart or trailer as some vendors have already invested significant time and money in building their cart to suit their needs and preferences. Requiring a specific model of trailer will make some of these existing carts unusable in the public spaces while also increasing the start-up costs for new carts, especially as we emerge from the pandemic.

The city has an opportunity to pilot new ways of working with food carts in the ROW, and potentially engage in consensus building, through the distribution of Healthy Business permits which have been issued in response to COVID-19 health mandates. Brick-and-mortar restaurants have easily been able to apply for a permit for seating that extends into the ROW. BPS Central City has not seen any issues with decks being built into the ROW when it is serving these brick-and-mortar restaurants, and these decks are not required to go through a design review process. With the implementation of outdoor seating being one of the ways to help restaurants stay open during COVID-19, “the uses for curb zones have loosened over the last year, and this might be something that could help food carts too” (PBOT). If brick-and-mortar restaurants are able to use the ROW in this manner, and feedback has generally been positive, then there is an opportunity for food carts to similarly expand their operations into ROW settings.

## CROSS-BUREAU COLLABORATION IS SLOW & CAN BE TENSE

One of the biggest challenges around creating regulation for food carts in public spaces is that the “structure of the city government makes [cross-bu-

reau] communicating challenging” (PMO). Each bureau has a working relationship with at least one other bureau where their oversight overlaps or intersects in some way. This creates helpful and productive cooperation between bureaus, but it also means that there is more at stake when there is a disagreement.

Another challenge to forging strong cross-bureau relationships has been the regular turnover of elected commissioners and the differing priorities of bureau leadership meaning efforts to bring food carts into the public spaces have often fallen by the wayside when there is no one ‘championing’ its cause to keep the discussion moving forward. ECP heard from several bureaus that the City Council has wanted to get the Ankeny West pod up and running as a pilot project, but that there have been regulatory challenges around which bureau oversees what aspects for this type of project as it intersects with a number of different jurisdictions and no one has seemed to want to take this discussion on. This is new territory for locating food carts, permanent carts “has never been done in the whole country” outside of private lots (PBOT).

There has been widespread support for getting staff from the different bureaus “to the table”, but bureaus have also not wanted to risk the degradation of park, ROW, and plaza space from poorly run pods by rushing into things. “Part of the dilemma is that Parks manages parks, and PBOT manages streets and there are some places where they overlap” (PP). There are also differences across bureaus financially and where their priorities lie. With some bureaus currently experiencing significant budget cuts and struggling to maintain their

operations and management of their existing infrastructure and lands, it is an uphill battle to advocate for the addition of complicated projects.

The pods downtown that exist on surface parking lots have tended to be the most poorly equipped pods throughout the city to operate within compliance due to the lack of investment by the property owners and/or operators. This is because the owners see their presence as a temporary use until the property has a proposed development and can be sold to a developer. This has led to a reputation associated with downtown food carts that they are not well run due to poor waste and environmental management.

However, the “pods that are actually professionally managed are actually compliant and are in line with everything” (PBOT). City bureau leaders are responsible for considering the impact of policy and regulation changes and the ripple effects they might have throughout the city and existing systems. When discussing the possibility of food carts operating in parks, this includes hundreds of parks of varying sizes with ranging levels of development: from completely unmanaged forest lands to highly manicured, amenity-rich public spaces that more closely resemble plazas. There are also many safety considerations to be made when discussing adding a commercial service to parks and the ROW. There are also concerns about exposed utilities being unsafe and unwelcoming to people walking around. These are the types of issues that city leaders have to take into consideration when discussing regulation changes in order to mitigate unintended consequences.

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## REGULATING FOOD CARTS IS REALLY COMPLICATED

Food carts can be hard to describe to someone who has never seen one before. They exist in a grey area somewhere between a car and a building, with examples spanning the full spectrum. This makes it very challenging to create a standard for how they can operate in the public space. When food carts first appeared in downtown Portland, there were no standards for how they were built or whether they could move around on streets because they were never meant to move. They were on wheels in order to be considered 'mobile' and not a building, but that is where their similarities with vehicles ends. Many of the carts that were built in this first generation of carts more closely resemble sheds or tiny homes, complete with shingles on the roof in some cases. These carts were not built to be towed or relocated on a regular basis, they were meant to stay in one place and operate for as long as they were able. Carts like this were built by hand, usually by the owner, and were fitted to their specific spot in the pod. Newer carts have improved upon some of the early models, with aluminum framing and compact fittings to allow for easier transport.

Examples of these more enclosed models operating on public property already exist, although the locations are extremely limited and specific. The carts at Pioneer Courthouse Square, which are run by Pioneer Square Management, are heavily curated and even these carts are not technically allowed to be there according to BPS Central City. "The carts in Pioneer Square or at Oregon Historical Society are totally illegal. We have to change a lot of code to make it happen. Because we've been generous in calling carts a vehicle, we have to change how we designate them." (BPSCC).

Another consideration is the creation of wastewater. Food cart vendors need to wash their hands, and that water is not considered greywater, it is wastewater. Wastewater cannot go into storm drains or be disposed of the way greywater is disposed of - it needs to be taken by a licensed wastewater hauler to be properly disposed (BES). Many of the older, downtown lots, have managed their wastewater by storing it in 275 gallon bins and paying to have it hauled away. Many newer food cart pods have been started with long-term operations in mind and have provided utility and wastewater hookups for carts, greatly reducing the risk of wastewater spills. A study performed by the Bureau of Environmental Services found that food carts that do not have wastewater disposal on site use  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the water that pods with sewer connections use. This indicates that these pods are being more frugal with their water consumption because their waste-

water storage is a scarce resource. This may also mean that these pods are less hygienic because utensils and hands may be getting washed less frequently to save space and water. Pods with fewer amenities are much more common in the Central City where food carts first began to pop up on surface parking lots. For the downtown property owners, the carts are seen no differently than a car permanently parked in the stall and are not being provided any additional utilities without paying for it. In some cases, cart owners are having to pump water into their carts themselves, which is not very hygienic, and they may not have access to garbage services. "I think it's mainly that the landlords have chosen not to [provide utilities], since they were some of the first [pods] there wasn't much of a template. City Center Parking\* was pretty frank about the fact that they weren't interested in doing a lot of investment in their downtown surface lots because they want to redevelop them eventually" (BES).

ECP attempted to interview City Center Parking but did not receive any responses to the request.

## ALDER FOOD CART POD, PORTLAND, OR



Image: WikiCommons, User: Visitor7



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## SURVEY ENGAGEMENT

ECP conducted its survey engagement for four weeks from April 19, 2021 to May 17, 2021. The 35 question survey was targeted at mobile food unit vendors located in Oregon with the intention of gathering information on the challenges their business faced in the midst of a global pandemic and what support their businesses need to assist in recovery post pandemic. The survey was distributed to an email list provided by Keith Jones of Friends of Green Loop and to a Facebook group page of the Oregon Mobile Food Association, which has over 500 followers. The email list provided by Keith Jones were vendors who only operated in the Portland-Metro area.

The Facebook page of the Oregon Mobile Food Association had vendors from different regions of Oregon. ECP included a geographic identifier in the survey by asking respondents to include their primary zip code where they operated their unit. The intention was that we would be able to identify trends between different regions of the state. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, ECP made the decision to focus survey engagement in an online format only.

The anonymous survey was designed and distributed through Qualtrics XM. To promote involvement in the survey, participants had the option to enter a raffle for a \$20 gift card to Fred Meyer. The survey contained both open-ended and multiple-choice questions. Questions with multiple choice options also allowed for write-in responses, while some allowed for more than one response. Unfortunately, ECP only received 14 responses during the engagement window. Due to the limited number of responses, ECP did not weigh data from the survey heavily in its policy recommendations. However,

there are themes ECP identified from the survey engagement that align with themes pulled from our food cart owner interview engagement, especially in relation to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health of their business and their recovery efforts.

### Identified Themes

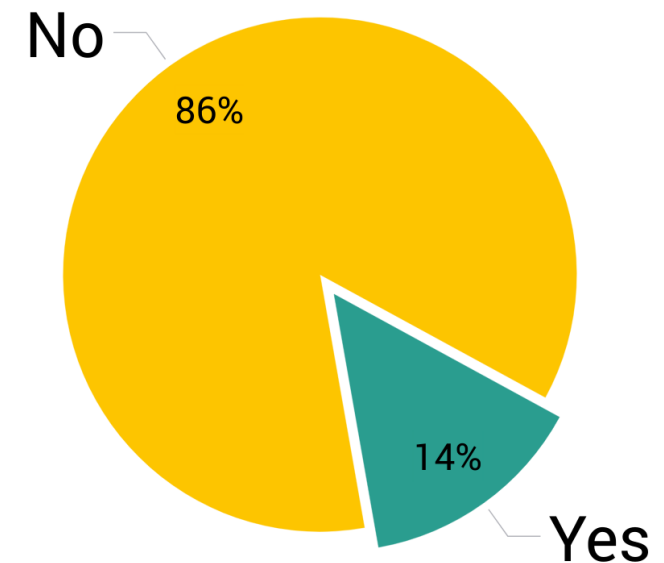
It's important to reiterate that statistical data from this survey is not significant. However, trends identified from the results do provide the opportunity to ask questions about policy that can benefit mobile food unit vendors. Below is a list of themes that could potentially be explored in further research. ECP asked respondents to detail challenges they have faced since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are responses from vendors:

**"IT HAS BEEN HARD TO GET SITUATED AGAIN AFTER THE LOSS OF OUR ORIGINAL SPOT. WITH THE ADDITION OF COVID AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS, REOPENING HAS BEEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. WE CANNOT FIND RESOURCES AND ARE NOT SURE WHERE TO START. WE ARE AFRAID OF TAKING LOANS BECAUSE OF THE LANGUAGE BARRIERS, ETC."**

**"THE CHALLENGE BEGAN AS THE DOWNTOWN FOOD CART LOCATION CLOSED, SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN HARD TO FIND A LOCATION AS BUSY AS DOWNTOWN PORTLAND. THEN THE PANDEMIC HAPPENED AND THAT JUST CAUSED ME TO CLOSE."**

**"JUST A LACK OF FOOT TRAFFIC HAS MADE US RELY MORE ON APPS LIKE UBEREATS AND GRUBHUB WHICH TAKES A BIG PERCENTAGE OF THE REVENUE"**

**PRIOR TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WERE YOU THE BENEFICIARY OF ANY PROGRAMS (LOCAL, STATE, FEDERAL, PRIVATE) THAT WERE SPECIFICALLY TARGETED FOR MOBILE FOOD UNIT OWNERS?**



Data Source: ECP Mobile Food Unit Survey

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

ECP asked respondents what kind of support would help their business thrive. One respondent stated “Networking with others, kitchen facilities that can be accessed/used without exorbitant costs. Marketing of food carts by governmental tourist/visitor agencies”. A few others mentioned that parking facilities for customers near the operating location of their unit would help their business thrive.

In interviews with food cart vendors, leasing space for a car on a month-to-month lease was a concern. 8 of the 14 respondents indicated that they were on a month-to-month lease. While the short-term lease provides flexibility, it also creates instability for the food cart owners who don't know if they'll be allowed to operate at the same location the following month.

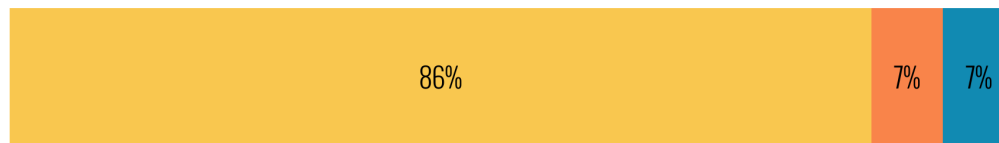
## WHAT TYPE OF LEASE ARE YOU CURRENTLY UNDER?



- Month to Month
- 1 Year or Greater

ECP asked respondents to indicate what their estimated level of revenue loss or gain from 2020 compared to 2019 was. 12 of the 14 respondents claimed they experienced a significant loss of revenue in 2020 compared to 2019.

## WHAT LEVEL OF REVENUE LOSS OR GAIN DID YOU EXPERIENCE IN 2020 COMPARED TO 2019?



- Significant Loss
- Minor Loss
- Minor Revenue Gain

ECP asked respondents to identify what kind of support services would help fight the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on your business? 9 of the 14 respondents indicated that additional loan programs would help them in post pandemic business health recovery efforts. Additional counts identified below:

## WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT SERVICES WOULD HELP FIGHT THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON YOUR BUSINESS?



- Additional Loan Programs
- Marketing assistance (increasing social media presence)
- Networking Opportunities (with other vendors, community leaders)
- Design Assistance (website, menus, marketing materials)
- Business Management Training Programs

Ideally, the above themes can be explored with more in-depth surveying, both online and in person. ECP hopes that the survey it formulated can be modified and used in additional research that will benefit mobile food unit vendors. A copy of the survey is attached to the appendix of this report.





## 6. POLICY ANALYSIS



## CASE STUDIES

In 2018, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce commissioned a report to evaluate the role of mobile food units across the country. The resulting report was titled *Food Truck Nation* and it examined 20 cities and what approaches they took to regulate and oversee mobile food units in their streets. Additionally, the report interviewed over 280 mobile food vendors to get their perspective on how the city's regulations were positively or negatively impacting their business. The information gathered was compiled into an index, with scoring generated across three domains: accessing permits, complying with regulations, and operating a business. Finally, these cities were ranked using their scores to determine which cities were most friendly towards mobile food units.

The reason this report is important to highlight is that it reveals the impact of policies on mobile food vendors. In the introductory pages, it notes that "Cities do not necessarily allow or ban food trucks. Rather, they determine rules over how, where, and when food trucks may operate that, in aggregate, often represent sizable barriers to entry. Regulations govern every phase of a food truck's life, from startup to operation and compliance."<sup>47</sup> With this in mind, ECP chose four of the cities from the report to explore in more detail to understand why they scored well, or badly, in the various categories.

The four cities chosen (Seattle, Boston, New York, and Denver) were selected because of shared characteristics they have with Portland, including location, size, or identity and also because they represented samples from the full scale of the ranking index. Portland was among the cities cited in the report and secured first place for being considered the most friendly overall largely due to the incorporation of food carts into Portland's

identity with widespread support from government stakeholders. However, it did not do so well when just focused on the elements related to permits and licenses where it ranked in 8th place, highlighting the importance of this project's objective in providing policy recommendations<sup>48</sup>. The report notes that permitting and licensing encompass five broad areas: administrative, health/food safety, vehicle requirements, employment, and zoning<sup>49</sup>. The main challenges noted by Portland vendors were the fee pricing, which was viewed as too high, and some operational requirements, such as excessively large water tanks, that they believed were unnecessarily burdensome<sup>50</sup>.

A key observation that the report failed to address was the difference in type of mobile food unit employed in Portland as compared to elsewhere. Most of the cities examined had developed policies focused on traditionally mobile food units, such as food trucks or push-carts, which can be easily moved several times within one day, whereas Portland's culture of food carts tends to be semi-permanent requiring significant effort to be moved. As a result, many of the insights and recommendations produced by the report are not directly applicable to the context of Portland, although there are still relevant policies and lessons that Portland can build on. Additionally, most of the cities highlighted in the report tended to shy away from place-making strategies around mobile food units by limiting the proximity in which they could operate to one another.

This is notably different from Portland's pod approach that has tended to be centered around bringing a number of food carts together to create mini-destinations (pods) throughout the cityscape. The other consideration that must be acknowl-

edged is that the majority of food carts in Portland operate on privately-owned parking lots as compared to most other cities that center trucks and allow them to operate in public spaces along streets. Therefore, the purpose of these summarized case studies is to evaluate what is working well and what approaches have failed in fostering an environment that is conducive to mobile food vendors wanting to work in public spaces and the right-of-way and how they might be applied to the context of Portland.

### KEY FINDINGS & POTENTIAL BEST PRACTICES

The key takeaways from each of the four cities are detailed on page 51. The compilation of these findings and how they may be used to influence future policy and permitting are summarized on page 52.



## CASE STUDIES

### KEY FINDINGS: CASE STUDY CITIES



### BEST PRACTICES

1

#### CENTRALIZED RESOURCES

Cities should provide centralized resources, such as one compiled website with necessary links, to guide vendors on how to apply for permits, submit fees, and adhere to operational requirements.

2

#### STRONG BUSINESS PLAN

Requiring a strong business plan to be submitted for permitting may be challenging for some vendors (i.e. non-native English speakers).

3

#### BUREAU COORDINATION

In urban areas with multiple jurisdictions and bureaus, a coordination office may help streamline the permitting process, making it easier for the city to oversee and also reduce barriers to entry for potential entrepreneurs.

4

#### CONSISTENT REGULATION

Consistency in regulation enforcement will reduce uncertainty for vendors, while also ensuring they are not being cost-burdened to make changes every few months to meet new requirements.

5

#### CITIES CAN AVOID LOST REVENUE

Cities need to make an effort to find the equilibrium between supply and demand of mobile food unit permits or they will miss out on potential revenue streams, lack adequate oversight, and create a gap to be filled by illegal transactions.





## CASE STUDIES

### SEATTLE, WA: UNFRIENDLY FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS

The *Food Truck Nation* report lists Seattle, Washington among the strictest cities in the country for permitting involved in becoming a mobile food vendor<sup>51</sup>. First, there are multiple public agencies throughout the city from which potential vendors are required to obtain permits in order to operate and many of these agencies require fees to process and approve the permits. Second, these agencies have established a number of parameters that limit the potential uses of the mobile food unit. For example, preparation of food on site (i.e. in the truck itself) is strictly prohibited, which requires the vendors to prepare food in commissary kitchens where they can be charged upwards of \$1,250 per month.

This restriction greatly reduces the flexibility of locations afforded to this type of mobile food unit as they are bound to being near areas with access to these types of kitchens rather than being truly mobile<sup>52</sup>. Finally, beyond these financial and logistical barriers placed on budding entrepreneurs, there is a significant time hurdle to overcome. The permitting process can be lengthy and delays can happen if a step in the ordered procedures is missed, with some applicants noting it could take as long as 8 weeks to receive their permits.

Despite this multilayered bureaucracy, the City of Seattle's website does provide clear visual aids and checklists that can be followed when applying for a mobile food unit permit. These consolidated materials assist prospective food cart owners by removing some of the ambiguity around the process of obtaining the required permits and knowing where to send the appropriate applications and fees. However, upon reviewing the supplied checklists, it becomes apparent that Seattle has chosen to oversee mobile food units through the use of significant regulation, creating a disconnected and disorganized system.

There are at least four different agencies that require a permit for food vending, such as the public health department and the fire department, with processing timelines ranging anywhere between 2 and 8 weeks<sup>53</sup>. Each of these agencies has a different set of requirements and locations to send the permits and fees, creating a complex and convoluted process to opening a mobile food business. This is further complicated by the Seattle Department of Transportation's street use permitting process which varies depending on if the cart is intending to operate on a curb temporarily, semi-permanently, or seasonally. Additionally, depending on the proposed site of a permanent or semi-permanent food cart or truck, the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections may also require another

permit. Exceptions to this type of permit stipulate for the unit to not be left at the location overnight, have permission from the property owner, be located at least 50 feet away from a residential zone, and be located in an area used for parking<sup>54</sup>.

The combination of these aspects severely restrict where, how, and when a mobile food unit can operate throughout the city. Seattle does have several designated food-vehicle zones which allow vendors to apply to be temporarily located along a curb or in a parking space for up to a year. However, the permit only allows for the vendors to occupy these spaces in 4 hour increments, meaning they are unable to leave their food unit, such as a cart or truck, at the site<sup>55</sup>. For a paid parking stall, the fees start at \$478 dollars for the year, which gives the vendor one 4-hour window on one day of each week - i.e. every Monday from 10am-2pm.



*Bread & Circuses  
Seattle, Image: Bread  
& Circuses Facebook*

# CASE STUDIES

## Seattle Mobile Vendor Fee Schedule

Description	Fee
Occupation fee, per 4-hour block of vending - paid parking stall	\$478
Occupation fee, per 4-hour block of vending - non-paid parking stall	\$104
Issuance Fee	\$181
Hourly Review and Inspection Rate - invoiced	\$278
<b>Permit Duration</b>	<b>1 Year</b>

Example: vending one day a week in a paid parking stall for 4-hours would have a \$478 yearly Occupation fee. Vending two days a week in a paid parking stall for 4-hours each day would have a \$956 yearly Occupation fee.

Source: City of Seattle, WA

Therefore, if a vendor wants to be open 4-hours a day every day of the week, they are looking at a permitting fee of \$3,346 per year. For a non-paid stall with the same number of hours, this fee drops to \$104 per 4-hours, or \$728 per year. This may be viable for a mobile cart that is easily able to leave the site each day and only wants to be open 4-hours a day, but when considered from the perspective of a permanent food cart these fees would become significantly higher. For example, to have pay for 24-hrs a day, all week, the paid spot fees would reach \$20,076, or \$4,368 for a non-paid spot<sup>56</sup>. The regulations adopted to oversee mobile food units have been designed to limit their presence to only a few hours a day, in very specific areas. The lack of standardization in permitting across the agencies has created a bureaucratic environment that is unfavorable towards most street vendors, but especially mobile food units, whose business model is structured around semi-permanent locations.

## SEATTLE, WA KEY TAKEAWAYS



Seattle maintains a clear and easy-to-use website that allows vendors to find the permits they need to open and operate their carts and trucks.



The consolidation of permits between the multiple City and County agencies would reduce the amount of time it takes to receive permits.



Seattle's regulation creates an environment where only mobile vending is a realistic option, which does not translate to the semi-permanent carts that are commonly found in Portland.

## CASE STUDIES

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### BOSTON, MA: UNFRIENDLY FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS

In order to obtain the necessary approvals to launch a mobile food unit, the City of Boston requires up to 22 distinct interactions with different regulators, with over 30 procedures to be followed, making it the most difficult city for mobile food units to navigate out of the twenty cities evaluated by the *Food Truck Nation* report<sup>57</sup>. The number of agencies involved in the process, each with some type of service fee, has made Boston one of the most expensive cities for a mobile food unit to operate.

These service fees range from standard licensing, to more nuanced aspects such as the city's stipulation that vendors must rent a GPS unit from the city's preferred vendor (\$299), allow that vendor to install the tracking unit (\$89), and pay the monthly subscription fee (\$35) to that vendor resulting in over \$800 being spent in the first year of operations to a non-city organization. This highlights a significant challenge faced by mobile food vendors in Boston as the vendor is required to contact multiple affiliated agencies, which creates a complicated bureaucracy.

Even when all the permits are approved, mobile food units are faced with significant location restrictions as they are not allowed to operate within 100 feet of a competing business, which is loosely defined allowing room for restaurants or other businesses to challenge their placement<sup>58</sup>. Additionally, the city has designated three specific zones where mobile food units can operate, but has adjusted their payment into a tier-structure with Zone 1 being the most desirable location as it is in a 'high-traffic' area such as around the city hall. To access this first zone, food vendors must pay a fee that is two-

and-half times higher than the third (least desirable) zone and even then, they are constantly competing to access the limited number of spots as they are lotteried every year.

Finally, it is not a flat, yearly, rate, but is instead based on the number of shifts worked, meaning the more time spent in that zone, the more the fee increases<sup>59</sup>. The *Food Truck Nation* report estimates that "a food truck operating only at lunchtime Monday through Friday in the least popular zones of Boston faces yearly costs of \$14,400" while operating in the most popular zones could see yearly city costs exceed \$17,000<sup>60</sup>. Despite these obstacles, the Boston Business Journal noted that there were over 80 food trucks operating throughout the city<sup>61</sup>. send the permits and fees, creating a complex and convoluted process to opening a food business.

Another unique characteristic of Boston's approach to regulating mobile food units is the requirement for a very detailed business plan that the city recommends, including content addressing seven different areas. These include aspects such as what makes their food unit unique, how it relates to the city's overall diversity strategy, and how they intend to engage the local community around where they operate.

There are also operational considerations such as where they intend to prepare the food (commissary kitchens) and site specific details for each location they intend to operate explaining where staff will use the restroom, where customers will line up, how the site will be kept clean, and how they will ensure that they will not be blocked in by other

vehicles. Additionally, before mandates around menu options for both food and beverage items. For food, the vendors must submit a menu that has at least one "healthy option". This option has clearly defined criteria, but may put a burden on the vendors to alter their menu in order to meet it and keep certain items available even if there is low customer-demand.

The healthy menu option must include a dish that includes at least three of the following options: fresh or packed fruit with no added sugar, fresh or frozen vegetables with no added salt, a low-fat dairy option such as yogurt, or some type of whole grains, and all these options have very specific quantity minimums<sup>62</sup>. While the intention on the part of the city is likely to encourage healthy dietary choices, the requirement of submitting a static menu limits vendors to only preparing the approved menu and requires additional city contact for any menu changes<sup>63</sup>.

The most noteworthy part of Boston's mobile food unit oversight is their easy and intuitive online interface found via the city's website<sup>64</sup>. Each step in the process is clearly laid out with helpful links and clear descriptions of what is needed to complete the various applications. By outlining the process in a central location, vendors can easily navigate to affiliate websites to submit their applications and mitigate any ambiguity. However, it does not reduce the cost of these permits nor does it lower any other barriers to entry.



# CASE STUDIES

## BOSTON'S SOWA OPEN MARKET



Image: Bon Me

### BOSTON, MA KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. OVER REGULATION CAN CREATE MORE WORK FOR BOTH THE CITY AND VENDORS, INCREASING THE COST OF OPENING AND OPERATING A CART AND CITY COSTS TO PROVIDE OVERSIGHT AND PROCESSING.
2. OVERLY BURDENSOME REQUIREMENTS MEANS VENDORS NEED TO SPEND MORE TIME AND MONEY PASSING PERMITS AND LESS TIME OPERATING.
3. REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SPACES THAT CAN HAVE FOOD CARTS CREATES A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT AMONGST CART OWNERS AND “NO COMPETITION” REGULATION LIMITS VIABLE LOCATIONS.
4. FOOD CART ZONES IS A HELPFUL WAY TO ORGANIZE PLACES TO OPERATE WITHIN THE CITY, BUT ALSO CREATES MORE COMPETITION FOR VENDING LOCATIONS.
5. BOSTON PUSHES THE COSTS OF REGULATION ONTO THE VENDORS, INCREASING THE FINANCIAL BARRIER TO ENTRY WHILE ALSO REQUIRING ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS SUCH AS A BUSINESS PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT.
6. THE REQUIREMENT OF COMPLEX BUSINESS PLANS MAY DETER OR BLOCK SOME WOULD-BE FOOD CART OPERATORS FROM ENTERING THE MARKET.

# CASE STUDIES

## NEW YORK, NY: FRIENDLY FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS

New York City ranked in the middle of the *Food Truck Nation* report out of the twenty cities evaluated mostly due to its generally lower-costs to entry<sup>65</sup>. However, this is somewhat misleading as the city set caps on the total number of mobile food unit permits in the 1980s, with only 2,900 year-round licenses, and an additional 1,000 seasonal licenses<sup>66</sup>. It is interesting to note that New York City made an attempt to prioritize equity considerations by reserving 100 permits of the 2,900 to be given to applicants that are veterans or who have a disability<sup>67</sup>.

For a number of years applicants were placed on a wait-list, but this process closed in 2007 due to the high volume of applicants<sup>68</sup>. This number of permits is a relatively modest number compared to the size of New York City and has led to the creation of a “black market” for obtaining vendor permits as prospective vendors look to purchase permits from existing vendors. Some vendors reportedly pay as much as \$20,000 dollars every two years via this circumnavigation for a vending permit, which is almost 100 times more than the cost of receiving one from the city<sup>69</sup>.

Markets tend to be dictated by supply and demand, and by capping the supply of permits, the city has driven vendors to pursue these alternative methods at increasingly high costs. Many vendors view this as the only means to operate, even if illegal, as there is no longer a waitlist and the number of available permits has not increased. Despite these incredibly high prices, many would-be food vendors still view it as a viable option as compared to opening a traditional brick and mortar restaurant which may cost even more. Recently, New York City did

announce that they will be increasing the number of permits by 400 for each year over the next decade, essentially doubling the number of permits while also creating a cross-bureau office to provide oversight<sup>70</sup>. While this may lead to a reduction of black market purchases, it may lead to an increase in permitting fees.

Apart from the issues created by the use of a capped-permit system, New York’s system is fairly straightforward for those vendors who attempt to pursue a legal permit, although the likelihood of being approved is low due to the limited quantity available. For those vendors fortunate enough to get their hands on a permit, they are still faced with a number of other operating challenges, particularly in regards to the design and size of their unit and where they can be located. New York has a standardized sizing chart that limits mobile food carts to a maximum of 10 feet long and 5 feet wide, although food trucks are allowed to be larger but must comply with statewide motor vehicle laws.

Some food can be prepared in the mobile food units, but all units are required to be stored and cleaned a commissary location which cannot be the vendor’s home and the majority of food preparation must take place at these commissary locations<sup>71</sup>. Furthermore, there are specific regulations on where units can operate in the right-of-way as well as on the sidewalk<sup>72</sup>.

For example, no food truck can operate out of a metered parking spot, meaning much of the city’s main, downtown streets are off limits. Additionally, they must be 10 feet from any crosswalks and 20 feet from building entrances, further reducing the

areas they can operate. Fines are regularly issued for infringements on these spacing parameters and are viewed as a regular cost of doing business by most operators. Food carts and push carts can only operate on sidewalks that are 12 feet or larger, and similarly cannot be within close proximity to building entrances or crosswalks. There is no readily accessible map of legal food cart and push cart locations.



Wafels & Dinges NYC, Image: Gastronomy Blog

# CASE STUDIES

## New York City “What Mobile Food Vendors Should Know”

Source: City of New York, NY



Similar to Seattle’s permitting, New York’s regulations favor highly mobile food trucks as opposed to semi-permanent uses of a parking space by a food cart, especially because neither city allows for these food units to be left at the site overnight. These types of restrictions prohibit the mobile food units from creating some level of permanence or placemaking and do not allow for the addition of tables or chairs for customers to use while eating.

## NEW YORK, NY KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

The application process for New York is being improved by increasing the number of permits per year for the next 10 years, but the system has been functioning poorly for so long it is hard to know how long it will take to see a reduction in the market of second-hand permits. This second-hand market costs the city potential revenue sources.

2

New York’s online resources are robust and provide great visual aids for vendors. The documents are lengthy, but provide a sufficient amount of detail.

## New York City “Where to Store My Mobile Food Unit”



Source: City of New York, NY



# CASE STUDIES

## DENVER, CO: FRIENDLY FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS

The *Food Truck Nation* report ranked Denver as the second most friendly city (after Portland) to open and operate a mobile food unit because it requires the least amount of procedures, fewest visits to city offices, and remaining in compliance once operating is fairly straightforward<sup>73</sup>. However, similarly to the other cities examined in these case studies, Denver tends to favor highly mobile businesses rather than semi-permanent ones when it comes to food vending in public spaces. Policies adopted by Denver mirror those of other cities, such as the restriction of only being able to operate for 4-consecutive hours in a zone, as found in Seattle, and not being able to operate within 200 feet of any direct brick-and-mortar competition, such as in Boston<sup>74</sup>.

Denver has restricted mobile food vendors from operating within 300 feet of a park and has completely blocked access to several of the most highly trafficked downtown streets, both areas where mobile food units tend to thrive<sup>75</sup>. Other policies restrict mobile food units by not allowing them to occupy the same space with rules such as only 1 truck per zone lot, including privately-owned lots, and not being able to operate within 200 feet of one another which prevent place-making initiatives that these business might pursue by trying to work together<sup>76</sup>.

Another obstacle mobile food vendors face in these larger urban areas is the city-specific regulations, making it challenging for them to actually be mobile and visit surrounding areas. Food vendors in Denver specifically noted that it was quite difficult to be informed and up-to-date on all the policies for each specific jurisdiction<sup>77</sup>. This type of challenge presents a unique opportunity for the City of Portland with its metro-style form of government

meaning that some policies could be adopted at a metro-wide level, allowing more flexibility for mobile food vendors to visit different city jurisdictions.

However, this also is somewhat contrary to the style of mobile food units adopted by Portland which tend to be more semi-permanent in nature and would not necessarily benefit from metro-wide policies as much as truly mobile units would. The City of Denver does have thorough online materials explaining how to open and operate a mobile food unit which are both intuitive and detailed.

The instructions are straightforward and provide online links to assist vendors in navigating the appropriate bureau websites to apply for the necessary permits. Another resource that Denver provides is a detailed list of requirements for what equipment the unit must have in order to safely operate<sup>78</sup>. This includes water and electrical infrastructure as well as cleaning equipment, and storage. The guide also has a checklist at the end of the document for vendors to reference in ensuring that they meet the established criteria. Although there is also a preference for mobile units to use commissary kitchens, Denver does provide a list of additional requirements for self-sufficient vehicles which are able to store and prepare food “in-house,” or at the vending site<sup>79</sup>.

Despite these detailed lists, there has been some frustration expressed by mobile food vendors regarding the new safety policies established by the fire department which require updated fire-suppression systems and specify the type and size of gas lines and propane tanks the units can have installed. Although these criteria were established

to improve safety, they have put a financial burden on existing vendors and are not enforced in a consistent manner<sup>80</sup>.

### DENVER, CO KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. VENDORS BENEFIT FROM CONCISE GUIDES THAT SHOW THE PERMITS AND LICENSES NEEDED FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARTS AND SPACES.
2. PROVIDING CLEAR MAPS SHOWING HOW NON-COMPETITION REGULATION IMPACTS VIABLE LOCATIONS ASSISTS VENDORS IN UNDERSTANDING WHERE AND WHEN THEY CAN OPERATE.
3. IN AREAS WHERE THERE ARE MULTIPLE TYPES OF MOBILE FOOD UNITS, IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE CLEAR DISTINCTIONS OF WHICH REGULATIONS AFFECT WHICH DIFFERENT TYPES OF UNITS.
4. REGULATIONS FOR MOST URBAN AREAS TEND TO FAVOR HIGHLY MOBILE TRUCKS USING COMMISSARY KITCHENS OVER STATIONARY CARTS WITH THE ABILITY TO PREPARE FOOD ON-SITE.
5. REGULATIONS THAT ARE CITY-SPECIFIC, RATHER THAN METRO-WIDE, CREATE OBSTACLES FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS WHO ARE TRYING TO MOVE BETWEEN DIFFERENT JURISDICTIONS.
6. CHANGING POLICIES CAN BE A SIGNIFICANT COST BURDEN TO EXISTING VENDORS TO MODIFY THEIR UNITS TO MEET NEW STANDARDS.

# CORE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**“FOOD CARTS IN PARKING LOTS TEND TO BE A GOOD INDICATOR OF REDEVELOPMENT. IF WE COULD FIND A WAY TO GET THEM IN PARKS AND PLAZAS, THAT WOULD BE GREAT.”**

**-BPSCC**

*ECP has outlined 12 recommendations, including two core recommendations which are outlined below. The core recommendations should be the top priorities for the City of Portland to implement immediately. The rest of the recommendations also apply to the City, and can be phased in longer term.*



## CORE RECOMMENDATION #1

Create a position to act as the liaison between all City bureaus for food cart policy making, as well as a working group to encourage collaboration.

### TIME FRAME

**Near-Term: Should be implemented as soon as possible**

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

As citywide policy makers that collaborate between multiple bureaus and their roles within public and private spaces, BPS is well poised to take on the role of coordinating this process. This “food cart czar” could potentially be housed in the Mayor’s Office, although could risk becoming politicized or removed should priorities change or terms end. Prosper could also act as the liaison, although as a more direct stakeholder by owning developable land and providing grants, there could be a risk for conflict of interests. The centralization of the food cart regulation and resources will require a working group with representation from many of the bureaus, as well as input from community organizations and food cart owners.

### DESCRIPTION:

Many of the bureaus that ECP met with stated that they felt that they wanted to support food carts through clear regulation and planning, but did not have the capacity to take the lead. For many of the bureaus, taking the lead was a financial and operational task beyond their current capacity. Additionally, the cross-bureau collaboration between some of the bureaus involves paying different bureaus for support and complicating these relationships with another agency may create further tension.

### OPTION 1:

ECP recommends that BPS hire a Food Cart Policy Liaison or “Food Cart Czar” that serves as an intermediary between agencies, bureaus, and food cart owners to build consensus around regulation. This position will also develop a central online hub for all of the required documents for starting a food cart and a food cart pod. This position will help reduce regulatory gaps and overlaps by creating consistent and clear rules about permitted and unpermitted spaces and design features for food carts. The complexities of regulating food carts are only going to grow as surface parking lots are consumed by new development. If Portland wants to continue to have food carts downtown, Portland will need to plan for them.

### OPTION 2:

ECP also recommends convening a working group with members of BPS, BDS, BES, Parks, and Prosper. This group would meet quarterly to discuss challenges and opportunities with food carts in Portland, and be a resource for food cart owners. Many food cart owners ECP spoke with did not know who to turn to within the City for assistance. This work group would represent a diversity of City bureaus, as well as languages, races, and cultural backgrounds. The liaison will eventually be the main facilitator and coordinator for this group. Until that position is filled, BPS should coordinate.

**“WE NEED A COMBINATION OF BUREAU SUPPORT, POLITICAL WILL, AND COORDINATION (I.E. WORK GROUPS).”**

**- PBOT**

# CORE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

“A LOT OF IT [LOTS FOR FOOD CART PODS] IS ABOUT VIABILITY, WE DON'T WANT TO SET THE CARTS UP FOR FAILURE. WE WANT THEM TO WORK. HOW LONG WOULD IT SERVE AS A FOOD CART POD, WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO TEAR IT UP IN A COUPLE YEARS FOR DEVELOPMENT.”

- PP



## CORE RECOMMENDATION #2

Create an inventory of potential food cart sites with the lot information and desirability criteria in order to mitigate displacement issues.

### TIME FRAME

**Near-Term: Should be implemented as soon as possible**

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

This strategy would require a multi-bureau collaboration, or an intergovernmental agreement, to be successful. Key stakeholders would include Prosper for site ownership and oversight, BDS for zoning, PBOT and Parks for right-of-way and park space respectively, BES and MCHD for site conditions, and BPS for identifying sites and the long-term vision.

### DESCRIPTION:

Food carts, by their definition, are mobile units that function under the expectation that they are temporarily operating at any given site. However, one of the principle challenges that food carts face is where to relocate once they need to move, especially in the downtown and central city areas of Portland where there are fewer and fewer spaces due to increasing development. The city has the opportunity to participate in making this area of the city a more supportive environment for food carts in two possible ways, listed below.

### OPTION 1:

The City would conduct an assessment of the Downtown area, or the broader central city, to inventory underutilized public space, park space, parking lots, extra right-of-way, and hard-surfaced plazas that could be used to host a pod of food carts. The assessment would need to take into account considerations such as: lot ownership (public or private), lot size, economic viability and the ability of the site to draw foot traffic, place-making elements, access to public transit options, nearby tourist attractions, right-of-way considerations, adjacent lots and their uses, and overall safety and security. Once this inventory list is established, the City could begin designating lots in a priority ranking based on these parameters and so that when an existing food cart pod needs to be moved, it has a viable alternative location already established and the transition could happen more quickly, thus mitigating large disruptions to their businesses. This would be an effort across bureaus primarily managed and initiated by the person in the liaison position.

### OPTION 2:

Similar to the option described above, the City would first need to conduct an assessment of available lots and their viability in hosting a food cart pod. However, instead of relying on these as relocation alternatives for future displacement, the City could take the initiative and purchase several of these lots and designate them for food cart pods. There would have to be some oversight structures, an open and transparent process for selected pod management and which food carts can be at these sites, as well as funding for the purchase and development of the site. However, this model would help solidify food cart sites and provide stability to their business model. By intentionally finding and creating pod locations, the city would be preserving an important element of Portland culture.

“THIS TYPE OF WORK HAS BEEN CHALLENGING, ESPECIALLY GETTING THAT HIGHER LEVEL SUPPORT THROUGH COUNCIL AND BUREAU LEADERSHIP TO SUPPORT THE WORK (NOT THE LINE STAFF, BUT THE LEADERS DON'T SEE VALUE IN THIS TYPE OF WORK AS THEY ARE FOCUSED ON LARGER ASPECTS LIKE TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD MAINTENANCE).”

- PBOT



# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 1: CHANGE THE MENTALITY OF CARTS AS TEMPORARY USES FOR SURFACE PARKING LOTS

Food carts have proven to be an integral piece of the City's ability to weather uncertain economic conditions. The City should take a more active role in their support of food carts, especially within the central city. If food carts are to continue to thrive downtown, the mentality towards food carts must switch from a temporary use in an underutilized parking lot to an integral part of future planning processes within the City that in no way limits the construction of housing.

## 2: ASSIST WITH VENDOR COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDIZATION OF FOOD CART BUILD REQUIREMENTS

While some policies are already in place for new carts entering the market, it is important to engage cart owners in the process of establishing standards, so they can provide input on what types of standards are accessible. Additionally, a plan needs to be put in place for the transition process to ensure that existing carts are not disadvantaged and have ample time, resources, and support to update their cart or acquire a new one.

## 3: UNDERSTAND THE VULNERABILITIES FOOD CART OWNERS FACE, AND DESIGN FOOD CART PODS THAT PROACTIVELY PROMOTE SAFETY

Thinking long term and proactively about crime reduction will help establish food cart pods that work well for cart owners, visitors, and the surrounding

community. It is important that these measures are implemented with the goal of increasing partnerships and community connection, rather than pushing people out. Starting from this base of cohesion and community safety will create a network where there is trust and multiple community oriented solutions to crime, rather than a reliance on police and security guards.

## 4: CHANGE VENDING REGULATIONS TO ALLOW FOR MORE STREET VENDORS

Evaluate current street vending regulations and enact new standards that address food carts in public spaces as a component of street vending. If the portfolio of street vending is expanded to include food carts, it will increase the ease with which food carts can operate in non-traditional areas of the built environment. This recommendation would require intergovernmental collaboration between the City and the Multnomah County Health Department.

## 5: ABOLISH NON-COMPETE RULES

The use of non-competition rules is a common practice in cities that permit food trucks to use public space to avoid complaints from brick-and-mortar businesses and restaurants. Non-competition rules establish a hierarchy where brick-and-mortar stores have first priority and assume that trucks reduce the profitability of the business. For Portland, locating food cart pods around brick-and-mortar restaurants and bars has actually created an active and engaging experience that increases the economic vitality of the neighborhood as a whole.

## 6: CREATE CONSISTENT AND STANDARDIZED BEST PRACTICES FOR FOOD CART REGULATION. BUILD CONSENSUS BETWEEN BUREAU DO'S AND DON'TS

This list of best practices can help bureaus navigate the complex web of inter-bureau communication and inter-agency communication with the Multnomah County Health Department. This document will contain a point of contact in each bureau and it will list the bureau's best practices for food cart regulation. In a final draft form, a document of this nature can be shared both internally and externally to other outside agencies and prospective and current food cart and food cart pod owners.

## 7: CONTRACT OVERSIGHT TO ENSURE FOOD CARTS ARE NOT BEING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF AND THAT HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENTS ARE BEING CONSTRUCTED

Designate to the City Food Cart Liaison the task of food cart contract oversight. This will ensure that property owners or property managers do not overcharge for in-demand real estate. It will also ensure long term stability for property owners and managers as food cart owners feel a better sense of stability and protection from price changes. As part of a long-term stability plan for food carts in the Central City, a critical piece is the assurance that the spaces are financially feasible for micro entrepreneurs.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8: ONE-YEAR MINIMUM LEASE AGREEMENTS FOR SPACES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED, RATHER THAN MONTH TO MONTH CONTRACTS

Encourage long-term lease agreements between property owners and food cart owners. This will ensure more stability for both parties. If property owners are allowed to continue short-term leasing practices, the likelihood of food cart displacement and unsuccessful relocation increases. To encourage long-term lease agreements, work with property owners to better understand the incentives for short-term versus long-term leases. Present a viable solution or devise policy that regulates lease agreements between food cart owners and property owners.

### 9: CREATE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS THAT HAVE DESIGNATED SPACES FOR FOOD CARTS

If a current undeveloped or underdeveloped site is occupied by any number of mobile food units, the developer should be required to design their project with ample space for on-site food carts. This specific designation allows the City to enact guidelines that protect its food cart microentrepreneurs. Breadth is important in a dense, rapidly developing area where projects are difficult to track and the bureaus' bandwidth is stretched thin.

Developers should bring their design ideas for mobile food unit vendors as part of their design submission to the City Design Review Commission. ECP has developed a hypothetical model (page 64.) for what a mixed use development may look like with mobile food units in mind. The model ECP

developed is not in line with the zoning regulations of the City of Portland or any other jurisdiction. The model is purely conceptual and intended to give developers an idea of what it could look like. The model itself is designated as mixed but can easily apply to commercial or residential developments. It includes an open ground level component to accommodate food trucks or other units that are more mobile.

This would allow for different vendors to operate on the ground floor allowing for more vendors to operate out of the development. ECP envisions a top floor that is designated for vendors who wish to operate on a long term basis. Vendors would enter into long term lease agreements (greater than 1 year) for spaces that they can operate out of. These spaces would be part of the construction of the development. A commissary kitchen should be included for vendors to prepare food to be sold, as well as a dishroom to wash customer dishes on-site and minimize waste. The choice of rooftop location for vendors to operate out of is purely aesthetic, a similar layout can easily be applied on a ground floor level.

### 10: IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE PILOT PROJECTS FOR INTEGRATION OF FOOD CART PODS IN PUBLIC SPACE

ECP developed a concept for mobile food unit vendors to operate near O'Bryant Square Park. O'Bryant Square is proposed for the second phase of the Culinary Corridor and provides an opportunity for the City to allow for vendors to operate in the public ROW. ECP proposes closing down SW Park Avenue between SW Oak Street & SW Washington Street and SW Harvey Milk Street between SW 9th Avenue & SW Park Avenue. ECP proposed that at

least 10 vendors operate in the closed off streets. In addition to the closing of streets around O'Bryant Square, a new facility should be constructed north of SW Harvey Milk acting as a commissary kitchen for vendors. The facility can also house public restroom facilities, and eventually a dish room so that the pod can support a reusable dish program. ECP also proposes that the current parking lot on SW Washington be updated to allow for guaranteed parking for vendors and employees.

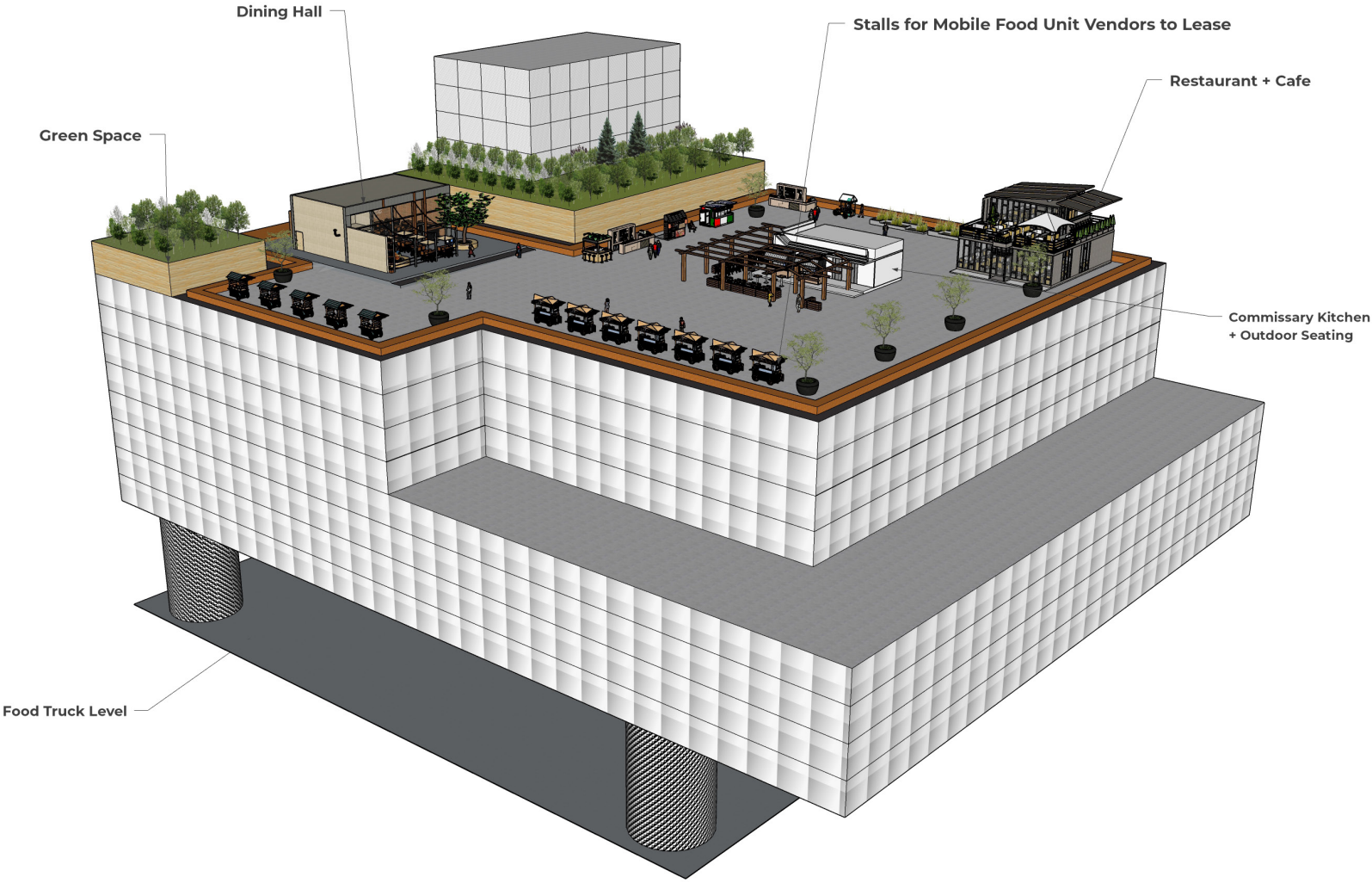
### 11: EARLY NOTIFICATION OF CART/POD DISPLACEMENT PROVIDED IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

Pod and land owners should be required to provide 60 days notice when they are developing or selling their property. There should also be an accountability process to ensure that the eviction has been properly communicated to and understood by all food cart owners, whether that requires translation services, multiple notices, or additional forms of communication.

# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

CONCEPT BY: EVERGREEN COMMUNITY PLANNING

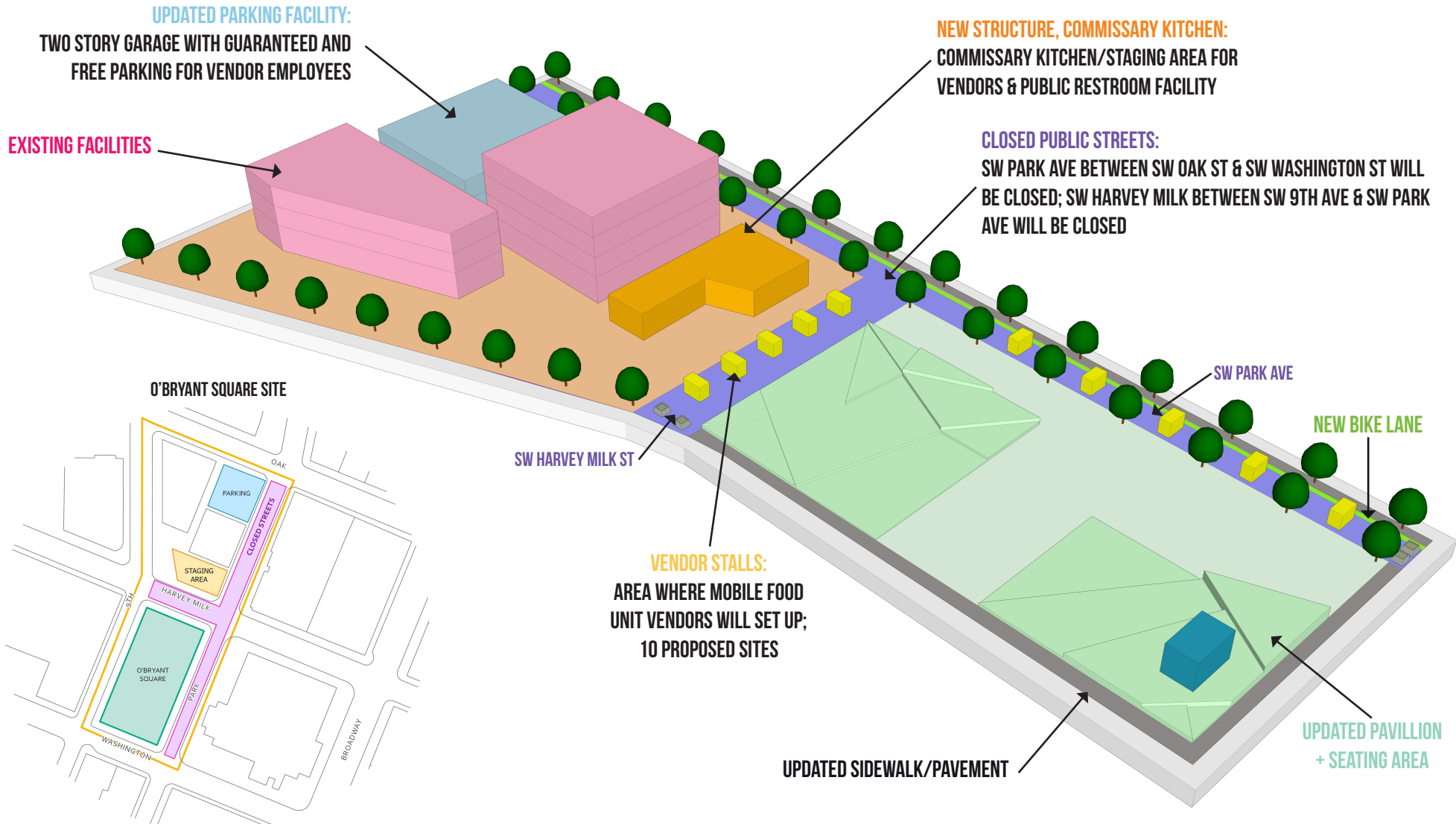




# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## REVITALIZED O'BRYANT SQUARE PARK SITE CONCEPT

CONCEPT BY: EVERGREEN COMMUNITY PLANNING







# LIMITATIONS + CHALLENGES

The development of this report has been the result of meaningful collaboration from Portland's public agencies, community organizations, as well as the wonderful food cart owners that shared their stories with us, however, this report is far from exhaustive. The limitations to this report fall into two categories: equity and research.

## EQUITY LIMITATIONS

During our engagement with food cart vendors we strived to include diverse perspectives and approach our interviews with flexibility and an understanding that food cart owners are very busy running their business. Despite our best efforts to be as inclusive as possible, there were some financial and logistical limitations to our engagement strategy that may have limited our ability to meaningfully engage with some vendors.

**LANGUAGE BARRIERS:** Some food cart vendors have limited-English proficiency which limited our ability to engage with them as we did not have the ability to provide translation services. All of the interviews that we conducted were able to be done in English, but we would have preferred to be able to offer translation services if the vendor requested. Additionally, outreach and surveying could have reached a wider audience had we been able to produce materials in multiple languages.

**DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT LIMITATIONS:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to host any in-person engagement events. This created an increased barrier to accessing our engagement for people who have limited access to a computer or the internet. Almost all interviews with food cart owners were completed via the phone rather than on a computer using Zoom or similar application.

**COMPENSATION LIMITATIONS:** While we were able to acquire enough funding to provide \$20 Fred Meyer gift cards to all the food cart owners that we interviewed, we recognize that this is not an ideal compensation method for perspective-sharing engagement. In the future, projects that look to engage food cart vendors should look to be able to financially compensate them with cash or cash-equivalent currencies. We were limited to using university supplied funding, which had limitations to how it could be distributed. Furthermore, food cart owners work long hours throughout the day so finding times that work for them was challenging making appropriate compensation all the more important.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Our research was focused on finding examples of how other cities manage mobile food vendors and centralizing the overlapping policies that Portland agencies have for managing food carts in our context.

**SHORT PROJECT TIMELINE:** We were limited to roughly 6 weeks to complete our engagement efforts. Setting up focus groups and working groups that would be able to meet and discuss preferred practices and policy development would have been a more robust way to engage with vendors, organizations, and public agencies.

**CUTTING EDGE:** Portland is already a leader in the mobile food vending industry thanks in large part to food carts and food cart pods which are an anomaly at the national level. This makes it difficult to find more progressive examples of food cart policy-making. For this reason, public agencies in Portland should be even more motivated to find innovative solutions and pilot projects to discover how it can continue to blaze the trail for activating streets with food carts.

## ANKENY WEST CONCEPT



Image: Friends of Green Loop



## FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES

### FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDY

#### HEALTHY BUSINESS PERMITS AS A TEMPLATE FOR TESTING CARTS IN SIMILAR SPACES

The implementation of Healthy Business permits in order to allow restaurants to acquire sections of the right of way outside of their shops has introduced these outdoor spaces as a way to activate commercial corridors. These permits were extremely popular throughout the metro region and were easily accessible. As indoor dining and shopping return, it would be interesting for PBOT and BPS to discuss ways to continue to permit right of way encroachment in the name of activating urban streetscapes. This may even extend to businesses or restaurants working with PBOT to lease out the right-of-way space to food carts or other mobile vendors to help bring additional attractions to neighborhoods while maintaining pedestrian access.

#### NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AS OPERATORS OF PUBLIC CART SPACES

Pods in public spaces will need to have an operator that is responsible for maintaining the permits and operations of the pod. Since the land that will be used for the pods as well as some of the infrastructure will be public property and public utilities, it would make most sense for operators to be required to be a non-profit that collaborates with the City. The profitability of a pod on public property is not clear at this point because there aren't enough examples. A case study examination of the Pioneer Courthouse Square food cart pod finances would be a helpful place to start if that information is available. The Ankeny West food cart pod will be the first large scale example of a food cart pod operating on public property.

#### PROGRAMS TO SUBSIDIZE PEOPLE OF COLOR AND IMMIGRANT CART START-UPS

As public agencies become more involved in the food cart industry, it is important their involvement does not push out immigrant and people of color entrepreneurs from the industry. Our case study research found that generally the more involved City and County agencies are, the more expensive it is to start a food cart. A way to reduce the impact on immigrant and people of color entrepreneurs is to set up a program that helps folks start up food carts. This program could focus on new cuisines or unique cultural street foods that folks want to bring to Portland. The program itself could focus on reducing upfront costs, or could be expansive as a non-profit that supports folks through the entire process of starting a cart from idea to first meal-served.

#### ANKENY WEST AND FRIENDS OF GREEN LOOP

Friends of Green Loop (FOGL) requested this PSU MURP Workshop to evaluate the opportunities and challenges to placing food carts in public spaces such as the right of way and in parks. While the project was ongoing, Keith Jones of FOGL was actively working on a project to revitalize the Ankeny West park with food carts - essentially doing what this project was researching. On April 29, 2021 FOGL secured funding from the Mayor's Office which proposed investing \$269,000 into the Ankeny West food cart pod. This jumpstarted the permitting process for getting Portland's first food cart pod into the public right of way. Ankeny West will act as a test case for many of the recommendations outlined in this report including how pods can serve to activate streetscapes, improve the pedestrian experience of downtown, revitalize underutilized

parks and plazas, and mitigate the impact of displacement on food cart owners.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In light of the findings outlined in this report, the ECP team urges the City of Portland to continue this discussion about how best to support food cart owners. The approval of the Ankeny West project is a promising step towards collaborative initiatives and should be used as a launching point for more relationship building. A key consideration for the City will be to actively engage the actual food cart owners in the discussion, ensuring that their perspectives and opinions are able to be expressed and valued. Additionally, there is an existing network of organizations already involved with food carts and investing time and resources into these networks will strengthen working relationships and lay the foundation for sustainable and successful food cart businesses throughout the city.





## 8. APPENDIX

# **LIST OF APPENDICES**

**1. PROJECT MOU + PROJECT WORK PLAN & TIMELINE**

**2. 2008 FOOD CARTOLOGY REPORT**

**3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

**4. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION INTERVIEW TEMPLATE**

**5. FOOD CART OWNERS INTERVIEW TEMPLATE**

**6. CITY BUREAU INTERVIEW TEMPLATE**

**7. SURVEY TEMPLATE**

**8. FRIENDS OF GREEN LOOP: ANKENY WEST PRESS RELEASE**

**9. EXTENDED SOURCES + ENDNOTES**

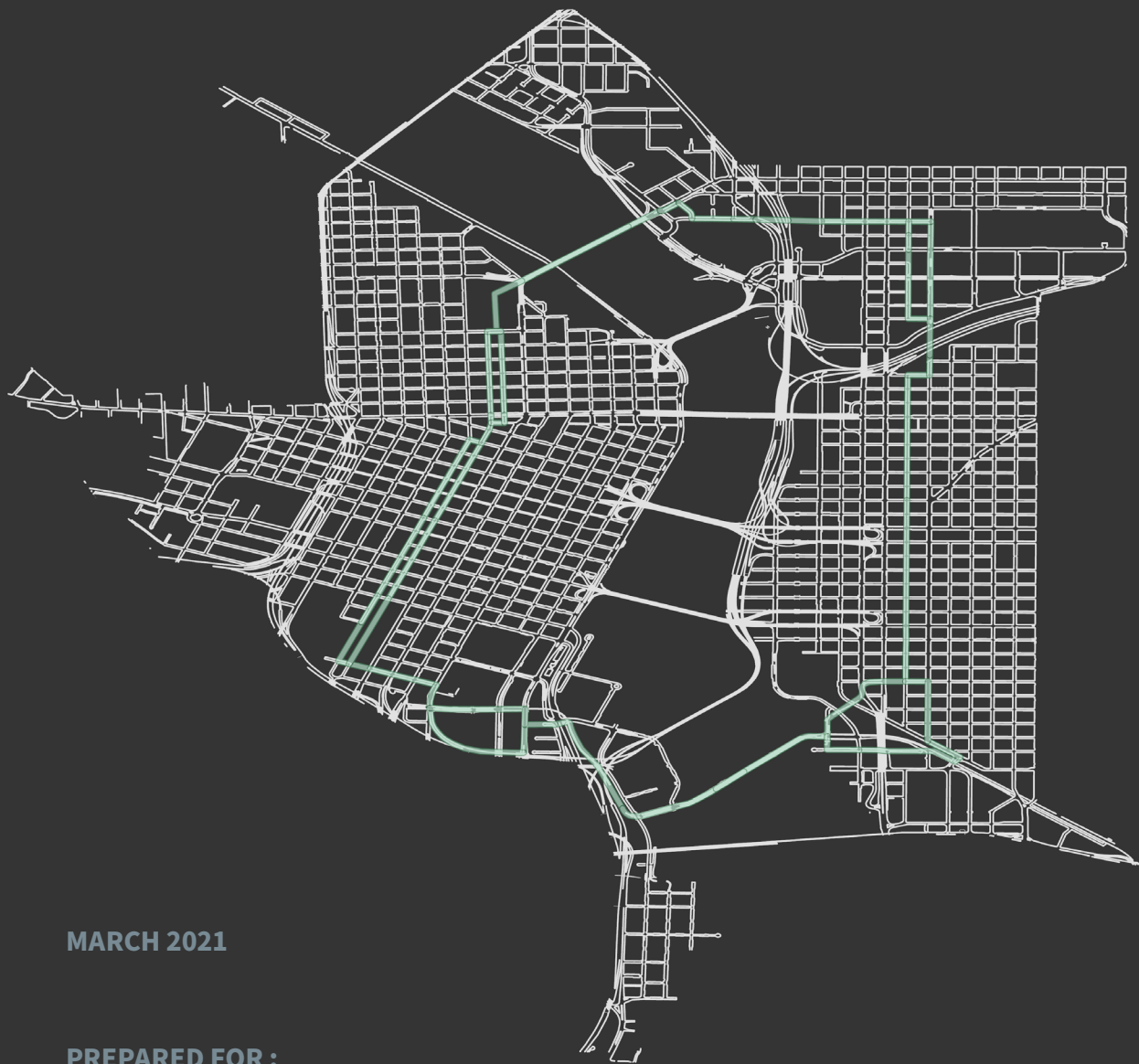


## **PROJECT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING & WORK PLAN**

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING +  
WORKPLAN

# FOOD CARTOLOGY 2021: RECOVERY IN CENTRAL CITY



**MARCH 2021**

**PREPARED FOR :**  
FRIENDS OF  
GREEN LOOP

**PREPARED BY:**  
EVERGREEN  
COMMUNITY  
PLANNING

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (“**MOU**”) is entered into by and between Friends of Green Loop (“**Client**”, “**FOGL**”) and Evergreen Community Planning (“**Consultant**”, “**ECP**”), collectively known as the “**Parties**”. This MOU is effective as of the last date of signature below and has a termination date of June 9, 2021. Amendments to this MOU and any Work Plan that fall under its purview must be agreed to in writing with the approval of the Parties (email will suffice).

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

This MOU will outline the roles and responsibilities of the Parties necessary to facilitate a successful and productive working relationship. Attached to this MOU is the Work Plan for Food Cartology, 2021: Frontline Recovery in Central City (“**Project**”). The Work Plan will provide a project timeline and list of deliverables to be provided to the Client upon completion of work by the Consultant.

## CLIENT & CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Evergreen Community Planning Responsibilities*

1. Technical Report: ECP will write a technical report that will be the primary deliverable for the Client. Within the technical report there will be:

- an existing conditions analysis,
- a discussion of methods used for the planning process,
- an outreach and participation strategy,
- analysis of gathered qualitative and quantitative data,
- a policy literature review of existing permitting and regulatory barriers,
- challenges with operating on private property (plazas, setbacks), and
- challenges to locating food carts on public property and right-of-way.

2. ECP will schedule biweekly meetings with the client with at least 3 days notice.

3. ECP commits to a reasonably quick response time for email and phone contact of no longer than two business days.

### *Friends of Green Loop and Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Responsibilities*

1. The client will connect the Consultant with food cart owners for focus groups and interviews early in the project. An initial contact list containing names of owners, their email address, contact phone, and primary business address will be provided no later than March 8, 2021.

2. Assisting in finding interpretation services, as necessary. A request for these services will be submitted by ECP to Friends of Green Loop and the Bureau of Planning and sustainability no later than 1 week prior to the need for these services.

3. The clients will attend biweekly meetings as scheduled. If a conflict arises, the clients will provide notice to ECP no later than one business day prior to the meeting time. Rescheduling meetings will be done on a case by case basis. Digital meetings may be recorded for clients that are not able to attend if deemed necessary and appropriate by ECP and the clients that are present.

4. The clients will share background information and other pertinent resources to ECP in advance of the project when possible. This includes vendor contact information, background information about related planning efforts that are in progress or have been completed within the last five years, collected white papers or case studies of related planning efforts done in other cities, and any other contextual information that the client has available that will assist ECP.



# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

5. The client has expressed an interest in having ECP interview representatives from specific agencies to learn about the existing perception of food carts in parks and rights-of-way. The client will provide a list of specific agencies that they would like ECP to interview no later than March 8, 2021. If there are contacts in the agencies that the client has, or would prefer ECP interviews a specific representative, the contact information for these individuals will be provided on March 8, 2021 along with the list of agencies.

6. The client commits to a reasonably quick response time for email and phone contact of no longer than two business days.

## *Friends of Green Loop Contacts:*

### **Keith Jones, Executive Director**

Keith Jones is the Executive Director of Friends of Green Loop and has been the project lead for the Alder Street Food Cart relocation and development of the Culinary Corridor. His knowledge of the Portland food cart scene will be critical to the study.

**Email:** [keith@pdxgreenloop.org](mailto:keith@pdxgreenloop.org)

### **Mark Raggett**

Leads planning and design for Friends of Green Loop. He also leads the urban design and planning group at GBD Architects. He has worked as an urban designer in the city of Portland for over 20 years working on regional transit projects, citywide and district-scale plans, and public space design concepts.

**Email:** [mark@pdxgreenloop.org](mailto:mark@pdxgreenloop.org)

### **Lora Lillard**

Urban Designer with the City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. She has been active in the field of urban design for 15 years, leading projects that affect changes in the design, policies and regulations of places throughout Portland, advancing a city designed for people. She will convene technical advisors for the project with members of the Bureaus of Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Development Services, and Prosper Portland.

**Email:** [lora.lillard@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:lora.lillard@portlandoregon.gov)

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the Parties have executed this MOU and Work Plan as of the last date written below.

Agreed To By:

#### **Client**

Signature:



**Name:** Keith M. Jones

**Title:** Executive Director, Friends of Green Loop

**Date:** March 4, 2021

#### **Consultant**

Signature:

*Benjamin Acord-Becker*

**Name:** Ben Acord-Becker

**Title:** Project Manager, ECP

**Date:** March 4, 2021

# PROJECT TEAM



**BEN ACORD-BECKER**  
**PROJECT MANAGER**  
Email: [acordben@pdx.edu](mailto:acordben@pdx.edu)

Will be responsible for leading the overall project, with an emphasis on planning and timelines to ensure that the group stays on schedule to produce the final product. This includes leading group meetings, building consensus, managing client and peer feedback, and providing support to group members throughout the project.



**NORA STOELTING**  
**OUTREACH COORDINATOR**  
Email: [stoel@pdx.edu](mailto:stoel@pdx.edu)

Will develop an outreach strategy and take the lead on any external communication and collaboration with groups outside of ECP. This may include scheduling interviews, emails to clients, and other communication to the public. Will promptly keep the team updated on communications that happen over email to ensure clear lines of communication.



**LAURA SHUMWAY**  
**SENIOR EDITOR**  
Email: [lshumway@pdx.edu](mailto:lshumway@pdx.edu)

Will be responsible for research as it pertains to contextual history and culture, and will be the lead on writing and assigning remaining writing sections to other team members. Senior Editor will also be the final editor and submitter of group assignments.



**ANDREW WESTER**  
**PROGRAM COORDINATOR**  
Email: [westeran@pdx.edu](mailto:westeran@pdx.edu)

Will be responsible for organizing documents, notes, data, and reports for the project while supporting other key areas such as data analysis and content editing. Additionally, this role will ensure that there is an equity lens applied by team members so that all stakeholders are represented throughout the engagement process and in the recommendations.



**KENNY WERTH**  
**POLICY ANALYST**  
Email: [kenwerth@pdx.edu](mailto:kenwerth@pdx.edu)

Will be responsible for synthesizing the findings from research, interviews, and surveys. These findings will lead to actionable recommendations that the client can take to have a positive impact and move their mission forward. In addition, this role will help to support the document and presentation design, as well as survey design.



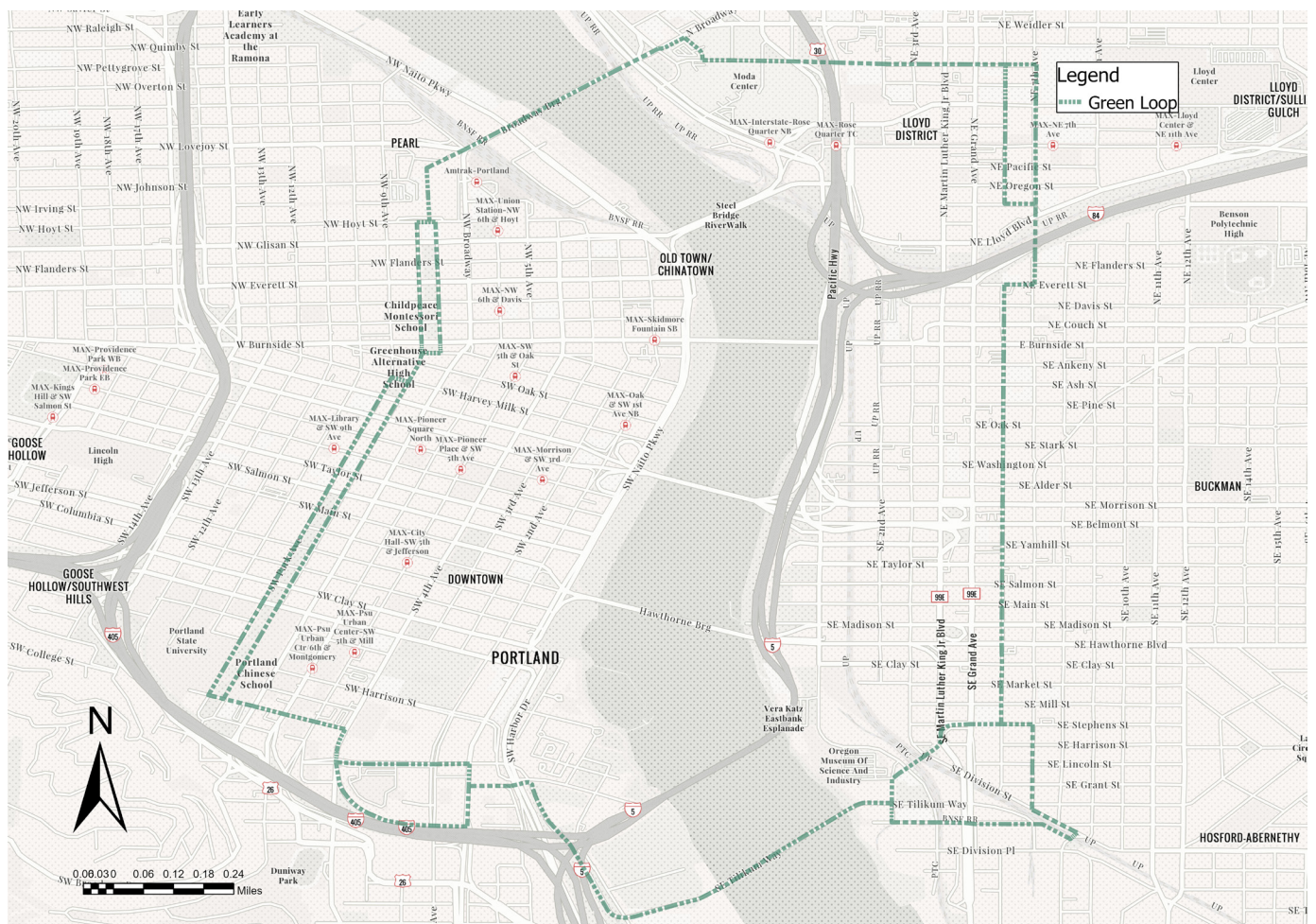
**ANDREW REYNA**  
**DATA + DESIGN SPECIALIST**  
Email: [andrr2@pdx.edu](mailto:andrr2@pdx.edu)

Will be responsible for design of any materials associated with the project. This may include reports, presentations, photographs, maps through ArcGIS, and illustrations. In addition, this role will conduct data cleaning and data analysis through Excel, RStudio, or SQL environment.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

As the city of Portland undertakes recovery activities following the devastating effects of the global pandemic, small-businesses, such as food carts, are poised to play a key role in that process. A study completed in 2008 by Portland State University graduate students highlighted the role food cart vendors play in the city's economic development and the opportunities these businesses provide to immigrant and BIPOC business owners, especially in the Central Business District (CBD)<sup>1</sup>. Food carts (defined as pulled trailers) and food trucks (defined as are self-powered, mobile vehicles) have continued to grow in popularity since then, resulting in their inclusion in city marketing efforts, as seen on Travel Oregon's website, and in city planning initiatives, such as the Green Loop<sup>2</sup>. The Green Loop is a six-mile linear park around downtown Portland, emphasizing pedestrian and bike right-of-way, and the comprehensive plan specifically mentions food carts as an amenity that plays a role in drawing people to the Green Loop and downtown in general, the focus area of this project<sup>3</sup> (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.**  
**Project Focus Area**



Map: Evergreen Community Planning



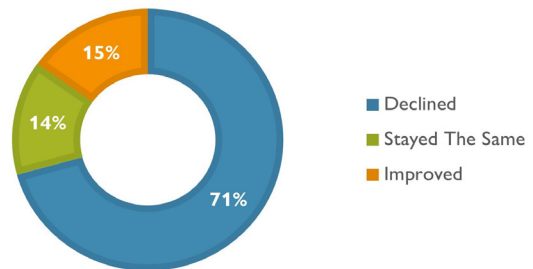
# PROJECT OVERVIEW

**THE CHALLENGE:** Today, despite widespread support, food cart owners still face challenges to starting and maintaining their businesses in the Central City area. First, there has been an increase in downtown developments which has displaced food carts from private parking lots where they have traditionally operated their businesses. This has been a longstanding issue with over half of food cart owners noting that finding a spot for their business is a key challenge<sup>4</sup>. The most notable, recent example was the displacement of Portland's largest food cart pod along Alder Street in June 2019 by a hotel development<sup>5</sup>. Many of these food carts have remained displaced and are yet to find a suitable alternative site due to permitting barriers despite support from Friends of Green Loop, Travel Portland, and Prosper Portland<sup>6</sup>.

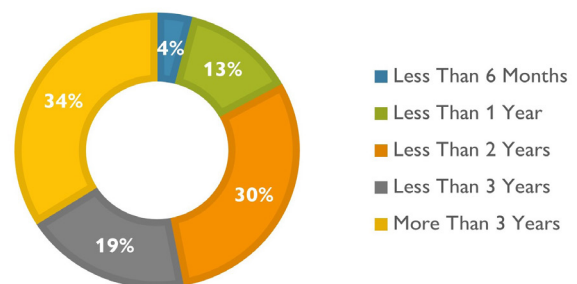
Second, there has been a significant loss of foot traffic in Central City due to the Covid-19 pandemic shutdowns which has resulted in a substantial loss of profit for these businesses who rely on downtown workers, students, and tourists for their sales. Additionally, recent political and civil demonstrations in Portland have changed public perceptions of the downtown area further reducing incentives for potential customers to visit (Figure 2). In order to survive, many food carts owners have had to raise their prices to meet additional costs imposed by landlords and health precautions which has seen some food carts close permanently<sup>7</sup>. Others have been more successful navigating these changes due to more flexibility in regards to the regulations they must follow in comparison to brick-and-mortar restaurants, but have struggled nonetheless<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 2. Business Health Statistics

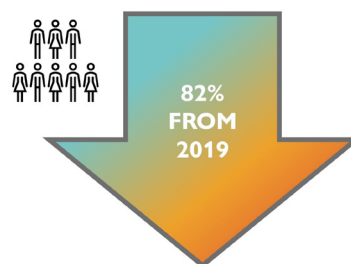
## HEALTH OF BUSINESS IN 2020



## BUSINESS RECOVERY TIME



## DOWNTOWN FOOT TRAFFIC



Data Source: Downtown Portland Clean & Safe  
2020 Downtown Portland Business Survey  
(Nov. 15 – Dec. 31, 2020)

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

**THE OPPORTUNITY:** The combination of these challenges presented by development displacement and the pandemic reveal the need for a strong, coordinated, and collaborative approach between food cart owners, the city, and other stakeholders in order to sustain the food cart industry and leverage the unique role it plays in the city's downtown economy. This presents an opportunity for Friends of Green Loop and Evergreen Community Planning to work together to identify the key needs of food cart owners, explore how to intentionally bring them into recovery and long-term planning, assess current policies and procedures for food cart permitting, and focus on supporting immigrant and BIPOC communities who make up a large share of vendors in this sector. Due to time frame constraints, this project will primarily focus on downtown food carts, specifically those found along the Green Loop Culinary Corridor stretching from SW Burnside to the Portland State University Campus and between SW 9th and 10th streets, although many findings and recommendations will likely be able to extrapolated for the city as a whole<sup>9</sup>.

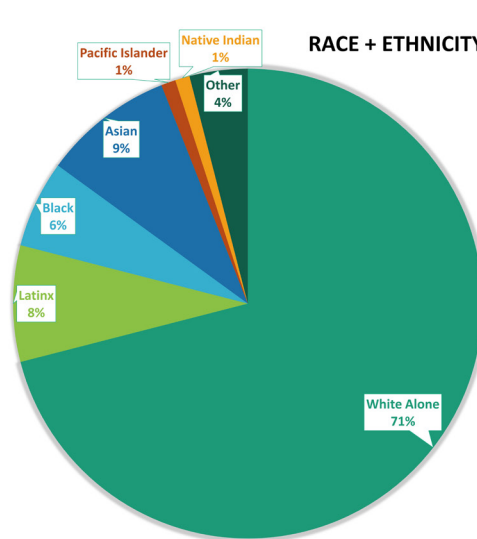
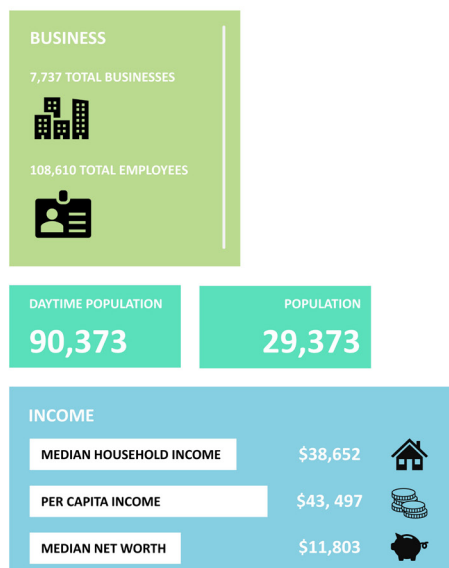


Figure 3. Key Central City Demographics

Data Source(s): Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014-2018 ACS via EPAE-JScreen, ESRI and Infogroup.

**EQUITY:** The Food Cartology study in 2008 found that food cart owners are often minorities and immigrants, with more than half of the respondents at the time noting that they had been born outside of the United States, with with increased diversity in the CBD than the rest of the city<sup>10</sup>. Although a more recent demographic survey of food cart owners has not been conducted, numerous news articles continue to note the high share of immigrants that continue to work in the sector and are thus disproportionately impacted by developments that displace their businesses<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, ECP commits to approaching this project by intentionally applying an equity lens throughout all phases.

ECP understands the definitio of equity to be the process of uncovering both historical and present injustices and disparities while actively pursuing policies and practices that work to redress disparate outcomes on the basis of race, sex, gender, income, disabilities, language, country of origin and more with particular consideration given to the intersectionality of these identities which have often further exacerbated oppression and/or discrimination<sup>12</sup>. ECP will work to address equity concerns in the following areas cited in Table 1. Further clarity of how these will be kept in focus throughout the project is detailed in the specific phases of the Work Plan.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

**Table 1. Equity Implications\***

<p><b>Structural Equity:</b> examines historic advantages and disadvantages for specific communities</p>	<p>The research portion of this project will work to uncover how food cart owners may have faced discrimination in running their businesses, with specific focus given to the potential language barriers that they face in accessing and completing city requirements in regards to permitting. Additionally, focus will be given to food cart collaboration to determine if they have been afforded the opportunity to work collectively to better advocate for their needs, especially immigrant and BIPOC operators. ECP will also examine how the city's expectations for security to be provided at food cart sites has impacted these communities.</p>
<p><b>Procedural Equity:</b> examines how to include historically excluded residents in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project</p>	<p>ECP realizes that Portland food cart owners represent a wide range of individuals and will work to reach as many as possible through focus groups and follow-up interviews during the engagement phase of the project in order to ensure their perspectives are incorporated into the needs assessment and recommendations. Specific focus will be given to ensure that BIPOC, Immigrant, and Women-owned business owners are interviewed. Additionally, ECP will investigate how food cart pods have impacted houseless populations and the relationship between food cart operators and houseless community members.</p>
<p><b>Distributional Equity:</b> examines how the distribution of civic resources and investment explicitly account for potential racially disparate outcomes</p>	<p>The 2008 study noted that most food cart owners did not access city or other external resources to help them start their business<sup>13</sup>. Through background research and engagement ECP will work to determine why these resources have not been accessed and provide recommendations on how to bridge the gap between these resources and the food cart owners, especially if it proves to be because of barriers tied to discrimination or marginalization.</p>
<p><b>Transgenerational Equity:</b> examines if the policy or project will result in unfair burdens on future generations</p>	<p>Although 66% of food cart owners (and 77% in downtown) noted that their food cart business was a good way to support themselves, only a small percentage had funds saved up for an emergency. Over half responded that lack of money was the main barrier to expanding their business. Additionally, independence was cited as a main motivation to running a food cart business and many were family-owned businesses<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, ECP will work to identify policies and recommendations that respond to the long-term needs of food cart owners in order to create an environment where they can remain economically viable, have protections against displacement, and remain autonomous particularly for immigrant, BIPOC, and women entrepreneurs who see their food cart as an opportunity to establish independence and provide for their family.</p>

\* This list of equity implications is not exhaustive and the final report will attempt to list limitations in equity



# PROJECT WORKPLAN

**SUMMARY:** Friends of Green Loop (FOGL) and Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) have approached Evergreen Community Planning (ECP) to gather information and stories from food cart owners about the challenges and opportunities of owning and operating a food cart in Portland's Central City. An exploratory study looking at the economic and social conditions of the Portland food cart scene was conducted in 2008 by a MURP workshop group in partnership with the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. This project is a follow-up to this work with a focus on Downtown Portland with specific interest in evaluating the long-term sustainability of food carts as small-businesses and how to assist them in recovery following development displacements and loss-of-revenue throughout the pandemic.

The 2008 study revealed that while there is a much lower financial barrier to entry for entrepreneurs to open a food cart rather than a brick and mortar storefront, there are a number of other factors that can hinder the success of these small businesses. For one, current city regulations make it difficult for a food cart to operate on public land or in the city's right-of-way. This relegates food cart owners to privately owned lots that can operate with limited oversight and regulation of the food cart's space. Tied to this, another issue is displacement from the development of the private land downtown. The stability of food carts downtown was shown to be dependent on the profitability of downtown development as most food cart pods exist on undeveloped parcels and surface parking lots<sup>15</sup>. When market conditions change and parcels are developed, there are frequently no replacement locations downtown for food carts to be relocated. One such example of this is the displacement of the Alder Street food cart pod between 9th and 10th avenues to make way for a luxury hotel<sup>16</sup>. Many of the carts displaced by this development have yet to find new, permanent locations where they feel will generate enough income to be sustainable.

In light of the lessons learned from the 2008 study and the pervasive effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, this project looks to gather an updated understanding of the economic climate for food carts in Downtown Portland. The 2008 study revealed that food carts offer a lower-cost option for BIPOC/immigrant entrepreneurs to open a business without the use of small business loans or other upfront equity requirements.

This study will focus on learning about existing barriers to entry for prospective entrepreneurs, limits to transitioning from a cart to a brick-and-mortar restaurants, policy barriers for food carts in the right-of-way or on public property, and how to include food carts in existing and future planning efforts by the City of Portland. ECP will achieve these desired outcomes by taking the existing materials compiled by Friends of Green Loop for advocating to public agencies in Portland and research preferred alternatives and case studies to make recommendations on how to integrate food carts into land use planning efforts in Portland's Central City.

This work will include an existing conditions analysis, case studies, outreach to city agencies and food cart owners, and policy research and analysis. These components will allow for ECP to make recommendations to Friends of Green Loop and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability on ways to improve the regulatory landscape for food carts in the City of Portland. This work will be compiled into a technical report that will be delivered digitally to Keith Jones at Friends of Green Loop and Lora Lilard at the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability at the completion of the project by June 9, 2021, as noted in the agreed upon MOU.

# PROJECT DELIVERABLES

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The intended outcomes of this project are centered around information gathering and advocacy for resources to help food carts prosper in downtown Portland. The primary deliverable is a technical report with qualitative analysis of interview data, existing policies and regulations surrounding food cart placement on public and private property, and recommendations on how to support food carts in downtown Portland. Associated with this deliverable are any final presentation materials, surveying and interviewing materials, and a copy of any cleaned data gathered during the project. Presentations to additional stakeholders and interest groups may be conducted at the close of the project upon request by Friends of Green Loop and the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

The technical report will contain the following sections:

- **Existing Conditions Assessment:** ECP will create a summary of the major findings of the 2008 Food Cartology report, a demographic analysis of the project area, and identify the existing regulations surrounding owning and operating a food cart in Portland's Central City. This section will also look at historic and current inequities in the food cart scene including unjust distribution of public resources, the instability of private-only siting, racial injustice or oppression from public bureaus and agencies, or other forms of oppression. The information gathered in this section will inform the amount and type of outreach necessary to adequately understand the existing inequities in the way food carts are planned for in the City of Portland.
- **Methods:** A description of the methods used by ECP is detailed below in the different phases. Additional information, such as the interview questionnaires will be provided as annexes to the technical report. ECP commits to a reflexive planning process with time set aside for discussing the type of methods used during outreach and data analysis. Following each engagement event, the ECP team will dedicate time to evaluate how it went and how it can be improved going forward, specifically in regards to equity concerns as ECP looks to identify and address historic and current inequities and engage marginalized communities throughout the project.
- **Outreach and Participation:** ECP will reach out to at least 4 public agencies that the client recommends for interviews. ECP will conduct at least 6 interviews with food cart vendors to gather information about the experience of opening and operating a food cart in downtown Portland, specifically exploring how displacement and the pandemic has impacted these owners. ECP is also considering 2 interviews with affiliated organizations and 3 focus groups composed of food cart vendors of 3-10 participants. These potential means of outreach will be determined by the results of the agency and vendor interviews.
- **Policy Literature Review:** ECP will conduct a policy review of the existing regulations and process of opening and operating a food cart in the City of Portland as well as current restrictions for food cart locations on public and private property. ECP will also research case study examples of other cities' methods of integrating food carts into their planning process and land use mix.

# PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- **Policy Recommendations:** ECP will provide no less than 5 policy recommendations based on the research conducted and the information gathered through the interview process. These recommendations will be focused on improving the economic viability of food carts as a small business, especially for entrepreneurs from historically marginalized communities including immigrants, BIPOC, and women. These recommendations may suggest changes to existing permitting processes or regulations, may suggest further outreach to communities or businesses, may suggest financial assistance programs, or other forms of public assistance to mitigate displacement and economic instability of food carts in downtown Portland.

In addition to the technical report, additional material may be compiled by ECP to complement the technical report and recommendations, if time allows. These materials may include:

- A simplified visual flowchart outlining how a community member can open a food cart in the City of Portland based on existing regulations.
- An annotated flowchart detailing the procedural challenges and limitations to opening a food cart in the City of Portland.
- Recommendations regarding the possibility of a publically accessible food cart database.



Image: Willamette Week



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

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In 2008, while food carts were gaining popularity in Portland, the City lacked knowledge of the industry to make informed policy decisions. The then Bureau of Planning partnered with PSU MURP students (“Urban Vitality Group”) to better understand how food carts operated, who was operating them, and how food carts were impacting their local street locations and larger neighborhoods. The Bureau was also interested in how food carts served as a low-barrier business opportunity for low-income and immigrant residents. The group set out to specifically answer questions about neighborhood livability (“What effects do food carts have on street vitality and neighborhood life?”) and community economic development (“To what extent do food carts serve as an entry-point into long-term business ownership?”)<sup>17</sup>.

The Urban Vitality Group reviewed relevant literature, collected data, and gathered stakeholder input. They began with an exploration of the history of food carts, particularly as they grew in popularity in Portland for local residents, and increasingly became an attraction for tourists, and continued to review relevant literature about the operation and regulation of mobile food courts more widely. They conducted site and cart inventories at four different food cart pod locations around Portland, and created maps of actively used food carts generally. Their engagement processes included vendor surveys, an online survey for general public perception, public intercept surveys (pedestrians near selected food cart pod sites), and neighborhood business surveys<sup>18</sup>. They also conducted in-depth interviews with some cart owners as well as other key stakeholders, such as City of Portland and Multnomah County employees who are involved in the food cart permitting process.

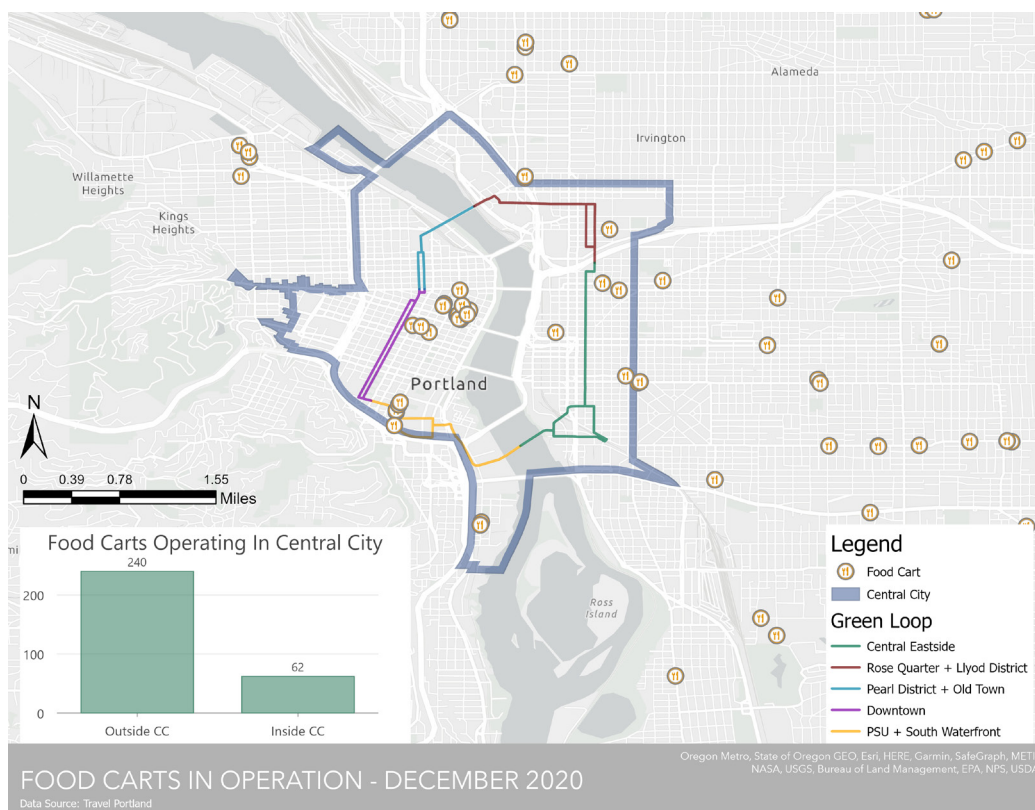
Through this process, the MURP student group compiled multiple key findings, including<sup>19</sup>:

- Food carts have positive impacts on street vitality and neighborhood life in lower density residential neighborhoods as well as in the high density downtown area.
- When a cluster of carts is located on a private site, the heightened intensity of use can negatively impact the surrounding community, primarily from the lack of trash cans.
- Food carts represent beneficial employment opportunities because they provide an improved quality of life and promote social interactions between owners and customers.
- Despite the beneficial opportunities that food carts can provide, there are numerous challenges to owning a food cart.
- Food cart owners do not frequently access small business development resources available to them, such as bank loans and other forms of assistance.

Their primary recommendations, based on these findings, were to identify additional locations for food carts, to increase awareness of informational resources for stakeholders in the food cart industry by connecting them with existing programs, and to promote innovative urban design elements that support food carts.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

Friends of Green Loop have stated that the 2008 Food Cartology report has been incredibly useful for their advocacy work and with lobbying Portland's public agencies to make the Central City a safe and reliable place for food carts to exist. However, new challenges have been highlighted since the 2008 report was published. As the city continues to develop, food carts face increased costs and regulatory barriers which increase their potential of being displaced. Further, Portland's downtown and larger Central City, where food carts have previously found the most success, face challenges from a changing landscape due to the Covid-19 pandemic and political unrest. Friends of the Green Loop has partnered with Evergreen Community Planning to build upon the findings of the 2008 report with a focus on making policy recommendations to mitigate the risk of further food cart displacement within the Central City.

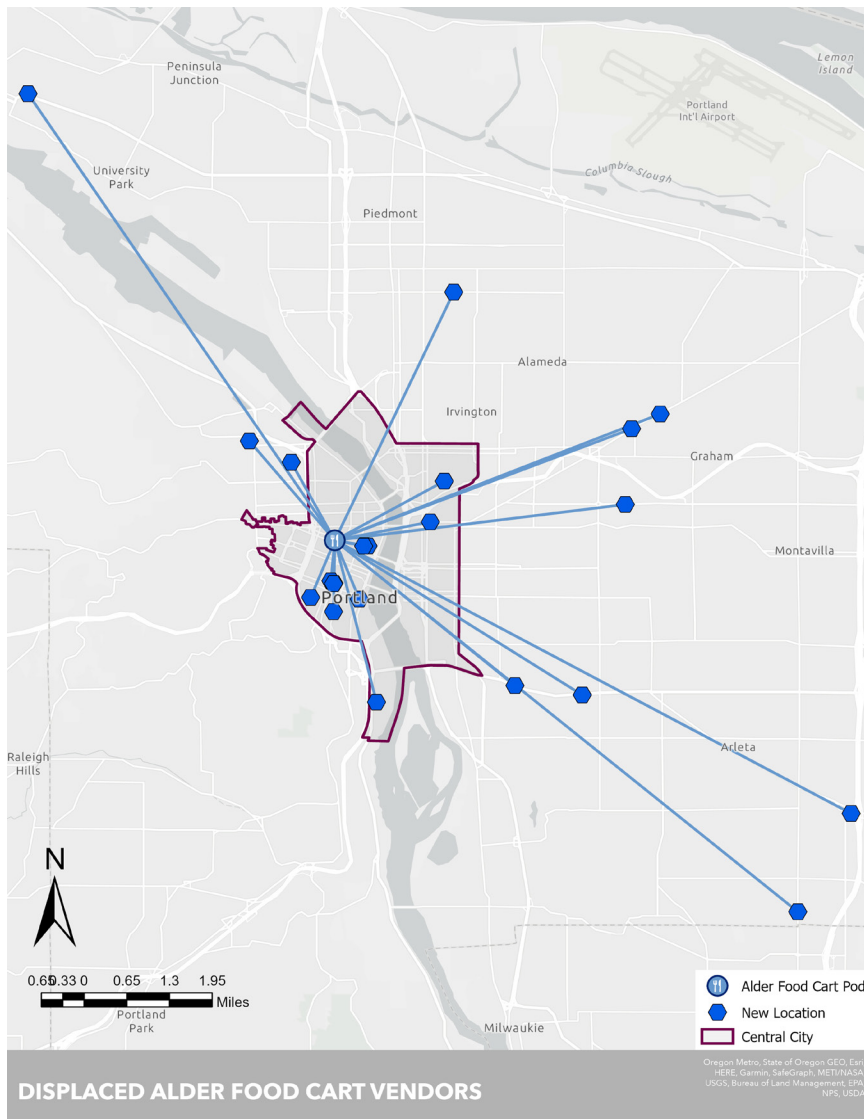


The background research portion of the technical report will focus primarily on general background research including a demographic analysis and will contribute directly to the foundation of the policy analysis and recommendations portions of the report. This analysis will explore the Portland food cart scene, including its history, culture, and representation in the media. There will also be an overview of existing food cart policies at the city, metro and county levels to gain a preliminary understanding of barriers to entry faced by food cart owners prior to direct engagement being completed with them. Additionally, the Consultant will provide an inventory of active food carts within the study area as compared to inventory counts completed prior to the pandemic to better understand the impact Covid-19 has had on food cart businesses. ECP will also work to identify where these displaced carts have resettled, particularly those that were part of the Alder Food Cart Pod that were impacted by the hotel development - at least 20 have yet to still find a new location to reopen their business.

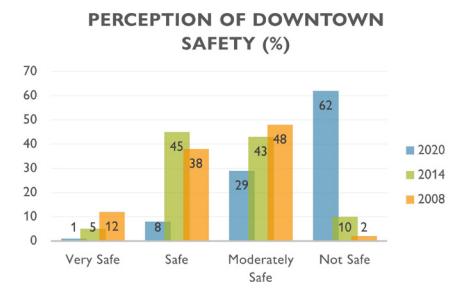
# EXISTING CONDITIONS

Lastly, the analysis will examine how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected Portland's overall restaurant industry, and food carts in particular, to better inform our interview and survey questions. A recent survey completed by Downtown Portland Clean & Safe which provides cleaning, security, and visitor information in the Central City area, noted that many downtown businesses were struggling. Over 70% noted that their business health had declined in 2020, while 34% predicted that it would take them over 3 years to recover<sup>20</sup>.

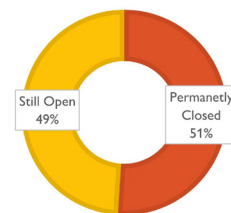
**Figure 5. Existing Food Cart Locations**



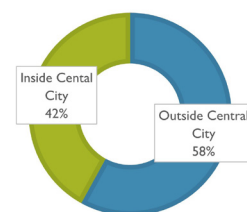
**Figure 6. Perception & Displaced Vendor Operations**



**ALDER FOOD CART OPERATION STATUS 2020**



**ALDER CART OPERATING LOCATION 2020**



Data Source: Downtown Portland Clean & Safe 2020 Downtown Portland Business Survey (Nov. 15 – Dec. 31, 2020) & ECP Analysis of Displaced Food Cart



# PROJECT PHASING

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## PHASE I: PLANNING & PREPARATION

The first phase of the project will be focused on laying the groundwork for future phases. This will include developing and refining the overall work plan, and beginning to compile background information regarding food cart locations in Downtown Portland. Preliminary existing conditions assessments will include research into existing policies and regulations surrounding food carts through bureau and local agency websites as well as documents provided by Friends of Green Loop. Demographic data of downtown Portland and more specific study areas, as relevant, will be pulled from the U.S. census to gather more contextualizing information about the study area. A map of the study area will be constructed to understand food cart distribution over the area. Other demographic maps may be constructed as needed. A project timeline will be developed to set up milestones and deliverables that will be due to facilitate completing all final deliverables outlined in the MOU.

### *Objectives:*

- Develop a project timeline.
- Develop a working relationship with the clients.
- Review existing information shared by the clients.

### *Strategies:*

- Delegation of research and writing duties amongst group members
- Review of shared materials from FOGL & BPS

### *Data Sources:*

- City statutes and regulations
- Local department regulations
- Literature review of previous food cart analysis and white papers
- Local GIS data of food cart locations (via FOGL & Travel Portland)

### *Deliverables:*

- Memorandum of Understanding and Work Plan

### *Equity:*

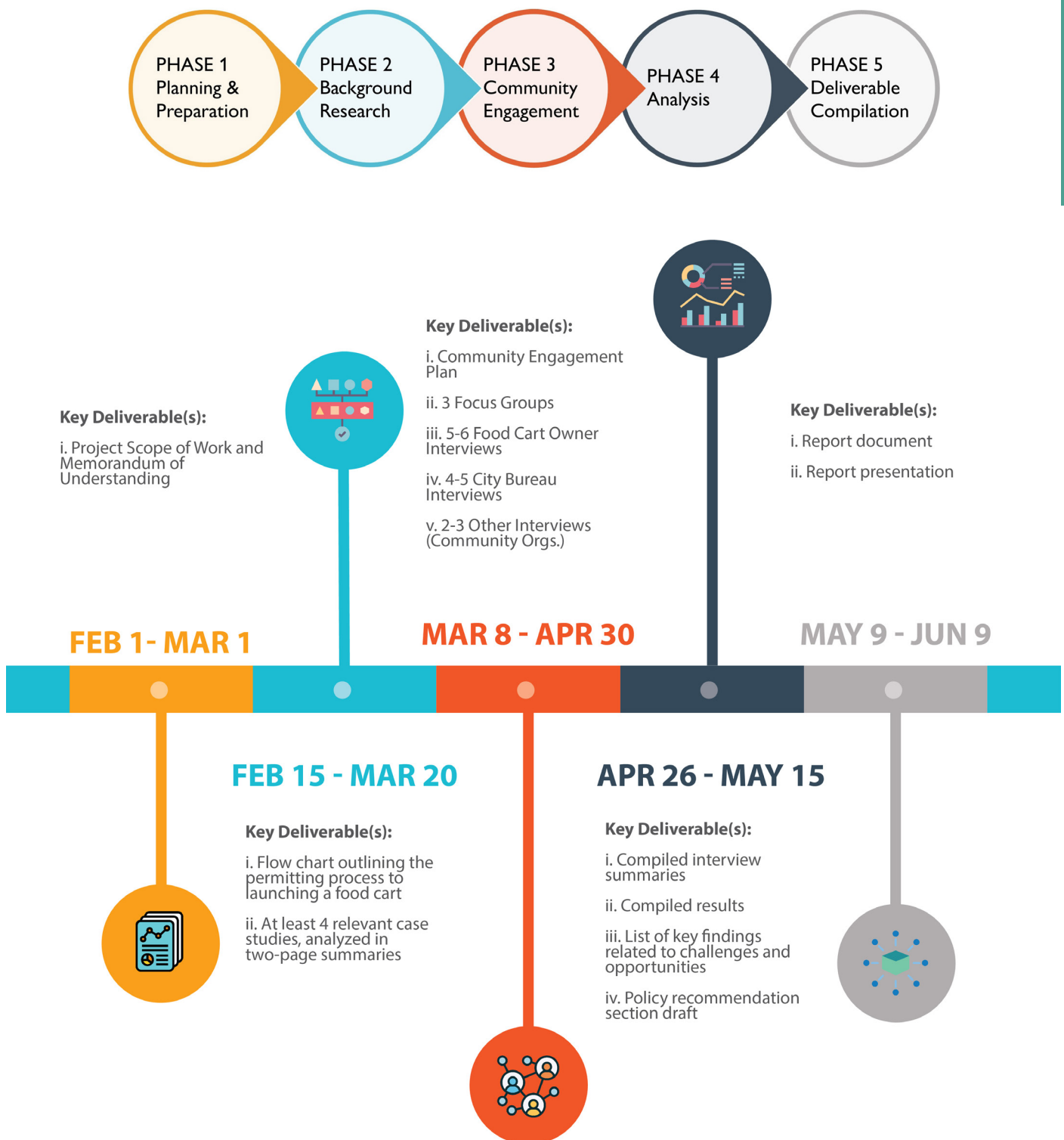
- A section of the memorandum of understanding covers ECP's commitment to advancing equity in the Central City through the development of policy recommendations that will improve opportunity and outcomes for low-income, immigrant, and Black Indigenous and People of Color as well as individuals marginalized due to sex, gender, or ability.

### *Timeline:*

- February 1st - March 1st (during scoping process)

# PROJECT TIMELINE

Figure 7. Project Phase + Timeline



# PROJECT PHASING

## PHASE II: BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Background research for this project was begun by ECP on February 15, 2021 to better understand the context in which food carts operate in Portland, including city policies, licensing and permitting procedures, and media perspectives. Additionally, the ECP team has begun to identify case studies from other cities that will be further researched to assess lessons learned and possible applications that Portland can use in addressing challenges faced by food carts in the local context.

### *Objectives:*

- Complete background research on food cart policies & regulations in Portland and how these compare to other cities researched through case studies.
- Identify and compile case studies regarding food cart policies that can be used to identify possible recommendations and lessons learned that Portland can apply to supporting food carts in the downtown area. As a starting point, ECP will look at cities referenced in the Food Truck Nation<sup>21</sup> report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation which sites the five “friendliest” cities to food trucks and the five “most difficult” cities to operate a food truck:
  - i. Friendliest: Portland, Denver, Orlando, Philadelphia, and Indianapolis.
  - ii. Challenging: Boston, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Seattle.
- Complete two site visits, including:
  - i. Post Office site to observe displaced food carts being stored;
  - ii. Green Loop Tour Walk (Culinary Corridor/Park Blocks) with the Client to get more background and FOGL vision for this section of the loop.

### *Strategies:*

- ECP team members will use academic research methods to search the internet looking for relevant case studies and unpack the layered bureaucracy of city policies outlined on public websites.
- Should clarity be needed, ECP will consult with the Client for more in-depth information and should further information be needed, questions will be crafted to be included in interviews with city bureaus during the engagement phase.

### *Data Sources:*

- City publications
- Media articles
- Published journals
- Existing RLIS and GIS data
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation



# PROJECT PHASING

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## *Deliverables:*

- A draft of a 1-page flow chart outlining the permitting process to launching a food cart business in downtown Portland, focusing on potential bottlenecks and access challenges that food cart operators face, specifically immigrant, non-English speaking, and BIPOC business owners.
- At least 4 relevant case studies, analyzed in two-page summaries with key, applicable take-aways highlighted for easy reference.

## *Equity:*

- Background research completed during this phase will focus on not only identifying standard policies and procedures, but also work to specifically identify how these have possibly created barriers to immigrant, non-English speaking, or BIPOC entrepreneurs from successfully starting and running their business.
- Identification of case studies that have an emphasis on immigrant/BIPOC business owners and/or discuss discrimination and the unique challenges faced by marginalized entrepreneurs will be prioritized.
- Identification of case studies that explore the role of collaborative action (i.e. business associations or pod-unions) will also be a priority in selecting relevant case studies.

## *Timeline:*

- February 15 - March 20, 2021

## **PHASE III: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

ECP will seek to implement a multidimensional community engagement approach to gather information from three key stakeholder groups: food cart owners, city bureaus, and supporting organizations. First, ECP will liaise with the Client (FOGL) to visit food cart owners downtown, with a particular emphasis on BIPOC, Immigrant, and Women owned food carts. The Client has already stated such an event is tentatively scheduled for late February or early March. During this time, after the Client has completed their responsibilities, ECP will request food cart owners to break out into focus groups. ECP plans to complete three focus groups simultaneously, dividing participating food carts owners based on cart location, language group, or other relevant information to have as smooth a conversation as possible with one ECP member facilitating the discussion and a second taking notes in each group. Appropriate health measures, such as masks and social distancing, will be adhered. ECP will work with the Client to identify a way of thanking participants for their time and participation.

The focus groups will be limited to forty-five minutes and be centered around key questions including:

- What are their largest concerns to operating a food cart downtown and why?
- What are their future plans for their business in the next five years? Do they want to transition to a brick-and-mortar restaurant? What would they need to get there from where they are today?
- What specific challenges do immigrant/BIPOC/women owners feel they face to be successful?
- What city support resources are they aware of to assist in maintaining, sustaining, and/or relocating their business and what challenges have they had accessing those resources?
- In what ways could the city best support them going forward? In what areas?

# PROJECT PHASING

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Second, ECP will work to identify 5-6 food cart owners who would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. These interviews will be completed after the feedback from the focus group discussions is compiled and may take place over the phone, online or in-person depending on availability. The purpose of these interviews will be to dive deeper into the focus group questions, allowing for follow-up questions, more details, and an assessment of other more sensitive factors such as impact of displacement and the pandemic on their business profits. ECP will conduct this work through an equity lens and will identify interviewees that represent a wide range of perspectives, including immigrant, BIPOC, women and other groups often overlooked. Interviewees will be given the opportunity to keep their names and information confidential, but will also be requested if they are interested in sharing their personal stories in order to add a human and personal element to the report. Interviews will be conducted in pairs by ECP team members, one to focus on asking questions and one to take notes. Finally, ECP will work to ensure that at least one interview is completed with a vendor who has been displaced to another part of the city and at least one interview with a vendor who has been displaced and has yet to find a new location to reopen at. If the information gathered during the focus groups lead ECP to believe that a survey would be more appropriate rather than follow-up interviews, ECP will discuss this potential change with the Client to determine the best course of action.

Third, ECP will consult with the Client to identify key representatives from city bureaus to interview in order to better understand the existing policies and permitting procedures, discuss the feasibility of relocating food carts to desirable locations downtown and the ripple effects that this might have on the city, and receive feedback from them on the concerns raised by food cart owners during the focus groups and interviews. ECP plans to complete 4 interviews with city bureaus, which may include representatives from: PBOT, Parks and Rec, Bureau of Development Services, Multnomah County Health Department and Prosper Portland.

Finally, ECP will also work to conduct interviews with other organizations or representatives that work with food carts. These will include nonprofit organizations in the area as well as potentially neighborhood and business associations. At the time of this work plan development, ECP has identified several key organizations it intends to interview: Hacienda CDC which works with food cart entrepreneurs as an incubator at the Mercado and the Oregon Mobile Food Association which works to promote food cart businesses throughout the state. Additionally, the Client has recommended that the Portland Business Alliance be approached for an interview to better understand the economic dynamics faced by downtown businesses and Travel Portland for perspective on how tourism impacts this economic sector.

## *Objectives:*

- Engage three different stakeholder groups (food cart owners, city bureaus, and other organizations) to gather information regarding: challenges, access to resources, and ways that the city and other organizations can support the sector.

## *Strategies:*

- Focus groups
- Interviews

## *Data Sources:*

- Participants in focus groups
- Respondents in interviews

# PROJECT PHASING

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## *Deliverables:*

- Detailed Community Engagement Plan to be produced and shared with Client by March 8
- 3 Focus Groups (with 3-10 participants per group)
- 5-6 Food Cart Owner Interviews (at least 2 displaced participants)
- 4-5 City Bureau Interviews (ex. PBOT, Parks & Rec, BDS, BES, MCHD, Prosper)
- 2-3 Other Interviews (ex. Hacienda CDC, Portland Business Alliance, OMFA)

## *Equity:*

- Many food cart owners are immigrants, non-native english speakers, and/or BIPOC. It will be important that they are engaged in places and spaces where they are comfortable and that are accessible for them. Effort will be made to ensure that they are engaged in a language that they feel comfortable communicating in. During the focus groups, participants will be able to be grouped by language group (if they feel comfortable doing so) and ECP will work with the Client to identify bilingual owners that can help with interpretation.
- The Consultant intends to share any material collected from interviews before publishing to ensure that responses are not misrepresented. Respondents will be asked if they would like to remain anonymous and can opt out of responding to any question that makes them feel uncomfortable. ECP will work to ensure that the food cart owners identified for follow-up interviews represent the wide range of operators that exist in the sector.
- The Consultant will engage vendors, city bureau officials, and other stakeholder organizations in order to gather perspectives from all parties involved sustaining the food cart sector in downtown Portland.

## *Timeline:*

- March 8 - April 30, 2021.

## **PHASE IV: ANALYSIS**

The fourth phase of this project will be focused on reviewing responses gathered from key focus groups, bureau interviews, and organizational interviews. The objective will be to situate food carts in the context in which they operate and help shape the narrative arc that they have faced due to the global pandemic and recent property developments that have forced their displacement. Additionally, the interviews will clarify the process for starting a food cart business, name key challenges or barriers faced by food cart owners, and shed light on city policies regarding food cart businesses. Besides challenges, the Consultant hopes to glean insights that could reveal potential opportunities that may exist to support this sector.

In addition to the response compilation, ECP will gather the research from case studies and policies in other cities to compare with findings from the interviews. This will allow ECP to identify similarities and differences between Portland and other cities to see what strategies have been successful.

## *Objectives:*

- Compile and analyze interview notes.
- Compile research and case study findings.
- Develop policy recommendation section draft.



# PROJECT PHASING

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## *Strategies:*

- Interview notes will be compiled into a single document with headings to highlight responses related to specific issues or questions.
- Research findings will be grouped by topic and key takeaways in order to be easily compared to findings from the Portland-gathered data.

## *Data Sources:*

- Compiled focus group notes.
- Key informant interviews with food cart owners, city bureau officials, and nonprofits
- Case studies and note documents.

## *Deliverables:*

- Compiled interview summaries.
- Compiled results.
- List of key findings related to challenges and opportunities.
- Policy recommendation section draft.

## *Equity:*

- Responses will remain confidential and anonymous, but will be analyzed using key demographic data metrics (i.e. language, gender, ethnicity, etc.) to best understand the challenges faced by each respondent and the unique perspective that they represent.

## *Timeline:*

- April 26 - May 15, 2021

## **PHASE V: DELIVERABLE COMPILATION**

The fifth and final phase of this project will be dedicated to compiling all of the materials written and researched into a cohesive report that presents actionable, equitable recommendations for the clients to pursue. The ECP team will work to create both a technical report that is accessible to all audiences ranging from community members to city officials, and a presentation which will synthesize key findings and recommendations from the full report. A presentation version of the report will also be prepared for stakeholder presentation opportunities.

## *Objectives:*

- Produce a cohesive, actionable report with an emphasis on equity concerns
- Create an engaging, informative presentation
- Submit materials to the Clients and University

## *Strategies:*

- Editors will pull together the background information and engagement findings to establish the contextual situation faced by food cart owners.
- Policy analysts will review the findings, assess existing policies, and develop recommendations that can be pursued on the individual (food cart owners), community (Friends of the Green Loop), and city (official bureaus) levels to support the food cart sector.
- Design specialists will develop a report and presentation template to input content.

# PROJECT PHASING

## Data Sources:

- Background Research
- Interview and Survey Findings
- Deliverables:
- Report Document
- Report Presentation

## Equity:

- Findings related to equity concerns will be explicitly called out throughout the report in each section area.
- Recommendations will be crafted to consider equity concerns and the wide array of perspectives represented by food cart owners.

## Timeline:

- May 9, 2021 - June 9, 2021

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES & MITIGATION STRATEGIES

A project of this scope comes with challenges and the ECP Team will work to identify and mitigate those challenges from the outset. Table 2 reflects a potential list of challenges as well as the strategies that the Consultant team will employ to reduce the risk of these challenges adversely affecting the project or deliverables.

**Table 2. Mitigation Strategies**

Issue	Challenge	Mitigation Strategy
Research	It may be difficult for the Consultant to access official documents related to policies and permitting procedures due to bureaucratic systems and the global pandemic.	The Consultant team will begin the research process as early as possible in order to allow for enough time to access relevant information. If necessary, the Consultant will leverage support from the Client and University to access this information.
Research	Although many cities have allowed Food Carts to become staples to the food scene, there may not be very many detailed reports available that cover information that is relevant to this project or that provide enough information to be a complete case study.	The Consultant team will identify cities that have a flourishing food cart scene to extrapolate lessons learned for the Portland context. However, it is acknowledged that relevant reports, especially recent publications related to the pandemic, may be difficult to find.
Engagement	It may be difficult to find food cart owners as they may be busy, work non-traditional hours, or may have closed their business due to being displaced and/or due to the pandemic.	The Consultant team will work closely with the Client (who has a long-standing relationship with many of these vendors) to raise awareness of the project and encourage attendance at the focus groups. ECP will work to identify at least 1 vendor who has been displaced and has not found a new location and at least 1 vendor who has been displaced and relocated to another area of the city to interview.

# PROJECT PHASING

**Table 2 (Cont.) Mitigation Strategies**

Engagement	Food cart owners may be hesitant to respond to questions if they believe that their answers could jeopardize their business - i.e. they may not want to discuss whether they have a permit if they suspect that the Consultant may submit that information to the city.	The Consultant team will work to word the questions appropriately, only gather relevant data, and ensure that the results will be compiled confidentially. Participants are also able to decline answering any question and participation will be completely voluntary.
Engagement	The 2008 Food Cartology study observed that a large number of food carts were immigrant-owned and this may present a language barrier while completing surveys and interviews.	The Consultant team will work with the Client to identify food cart owners that are bi-lingual and willing to assist the Consultant in completing surveys with other food cart owners who share a language. This is also an equity issue that the Consultant will work to mitigate through both wide-spread surveying and targeted surveying to ensure that under-represented stakeholders have the opportunity to participate.
Engagement	There is currently no budget for interpretation services or compensation for survey participants.	The Client has a strong working relationship with many of the food cart owners and the Consultant will work to leverage these relationships to encourage participation in the survey and interviews. If language proves to be a significant barrier, the Consultant will work with the Client and University to see if acquiring interpretation services is financially feasible.
Engagement	The global pandemic has impacted the ability of the Consultant team to engage in in-person activities, particularly in regards to administering and collecting surveys. Additionally, many food carts have shut down temporarily during the pandemic and may be difficult to reach out to if they are not at the physical location.	As food carts are situated in the outdoors, the Consultant plans to wear masks and complete surveys outside at a socially-safe distance. The survey will also be accessible via online so that food cart owners can answer at another time or in an environment where they feel more comfortable and safe. The Consultant will use previous records of food carts to identify food cart owners for surveying and not just rely on in-person interviews with carts that have remained open during the pandemic.
Policies	It may be challenging to provide policy recommendations that are actionable for the Client as they are not the authority to make changes to existing city codes.	The Consultant will work to create recommendations that the Client can use to raise awareness and inform the key city officials that can take direct policy action. Additionally, recommendations will be made with a focus on equity concerns, acknowledging that any policy or recommendation must be appropriate and useful for even the most marginalized or underserved communities.
Political Will	There may be resistance to the concept of supporting the food cart business - either from community or bureau origins.	The Consultant acknowledges that not all stakeholders view Food Carts favorably and will work to present information in a neutral and informative manner, although the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion concerns will be emphasized throughout the final deliverables.



## ENDNOTES

### Endnotes

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## **2008 FOOD CARTOLOGY REPORT**

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# Food Cartology

Rethinking Urban Spaces as People Places

**Urban Vitality Group**  
Planning • Economics • Consulting





# Acknowledgements

The Urban Vitality Group thanks the following people for their input and assistance to the Food Cartology project.

## Food Cartology Technical Advisory Committee

**Alma Flores**, City of Portland, Bureau of Planning  
**Clark Henry**, City of Portland, Bureau of Environmental Services  
**Ken Pirie**, Walker Macy  
**Kimberly Schneider**, Commissioner Sam Adams' Office  
**Lisa Libby**, Commissioner Sam Adams' Office  
**Lynn Knox**, City of Portland, Bureau of Housing and Community Development  
**Madeleine Mader**, City of Portland, Bureau of Housing and Community Development  
**Suzanne Paymar**, Hacienda Community Development Corporation  
**Sarah Chenven**, Mercy Corps Northwest  
**Cristina Stella**, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership  
**Ronda Fast**, City of Portland, Bureau of Development Services  
**Mark Gearheart**, Property Owner- Sellwood Antiques  
**Nancy Chapin**, Alliance of Portland Neighborhood Business Associations  
**Lizzy Caston**, LAD Communications  
**Hindi Iserhott**, City Repair  
**Ken Yee**, Multnomah County Health Department  
**Sunny Souriyavong**, Food Cart Owner, Sawasdee Thai Food  
**Nancye Benson**, Food Cart Owner, Moxie Rx  
**Kevin Sandri**, Food Cart Owner, Garden State  
**Andrea Spella**, Food Cart Owner, Spella Caffè

Special thanks to the faculty advisors who provided guidance on the project

**Ethan Seltzer**  
**Sy Adler**  
**Jennifer Dill**



Hannah Kapell  
Peter Katon  
Amy Koski  
Jingping Li  
Colin Price  
Karen Thalhammer



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# Executive Summary

The Urban Vitality Group (UVG) partnered with the City of Portland, Bureau of Planning to study the effects that food carts have on street vitality and neighborhood livability. The number of food carts within the city seems to be growing, while the City lacks sufficient knowledge about the industry to guide policy. The purpose of the study was to assess the benefits and negative consequences of allowing food carts within the city and to ascertain what economic opportunities may be offered by food carts, especially for low-income and minority entrepreneurs. The findings indicate that food carts have significant community benefits to neighborhood livability by fostering social interactions, walkability, and by providing interim uses for vacant parcels. Additionally, carts provide good employment opportunities for immigrants and low-income individuals to begin their own businesses, although there are significant barriers to continued stability and success. The City's support of the food cart industry can advance the key public values expressed in VisionPDX and benefit all Portlanders.

To understand the economic and social implications of Portland's growing food cart industry, the project's goal was to answer the following questions:

- **Neighborhood Livability:** What effects do food carts have on street vitality and neighborhood life? What are the positive and negative impacts of food carts on the community?
- **Community Economic Development:** To what extent do food carts serve as an entry-point into long-term business ownership? Do carts provide beneficial economic opportunities for residents of Portland?

UVG assembled an extensive body of information through literature review, primary data collection, and stakeholder input. Primary data collection efforts included: surveys of cart owners and neighboring businesses; an intercept survey of pedestrians around the study sites; an online public survey; site and cart inventories; and interviews of these groups, as well as other organizations that play a role in managing or supporting food carts as a micro-enterprise. These data informed a comparison of the start-up costs between a push cart, stationary mobile cart, and small storefront business. UVG studied four food cart cluster sites in depth, located in downtown, Sellwood, Mississippi, and Cully neighborhoods.

## Findings

The following key findings are based on the results of the data collection, as well as consultation with experts:

1. Food carts have positive impacts on street vitality and neighborhood life in lower density residential neighborhoods as well as in the high density downtown area.
2. When a cluster of carts is located on a private site, the heightened intensity of use can negatively impact the surrounding community, primarily from the lack of trash cans.
3. A cart's exterior appearance does not affect social interactions or the public's overall opinion of the carts; seating availability is more important for promoting social interaction than the appearance of the cart's exterior.



# Executive Summary

4. The presence of food carts on a site does not appear to hinder its development.
5. Food carts represent beneficial employment opportunities because they provide an improved quality of life and promote social interactions between owners and customers.
6. Despite the beneficial opportunities that food carts can provide, there are numerous challenges to owning a food cart.
7. While many food cart owners want to open a storefront business, there is a financial leap from a food cart operation to opening a storefront.
8. Food cart owners do not frequently access small business development resources available to them, such as bank loans and other forms of assistance.

## Recommendations

Based on the data collected, UVG's recommendations promote the benefits of the industry and mitigate negative impacts. The recommendations were also selected based on their ability to advance the key public values expressed in VisionPDX – including community connectedness and distinctiveness, equity and access, and sustainability – and provide sound guidance to potential considerations for the Portland Plan.

1. Identify additional locations for food carts.
2. Increase awareness of informational resources for stakeholders in the food cart industry by connecting them with existing programs.
3. Promote innovative urban design elements that support food carts.

Public authorities need to recognize and preserve any community places, regardless of their use or appearance, and encourage a variety of businesses by supporting small, independent businesses that in turn are better able to provide other characteristics such as permeability and personalization of street fronts - Vikas Mehta (2007)



# Introduction



The food cart industry appears to be expanding in Portland - in number, geographic location, and in the public's consciousness. A thriving food culture is evident in the long lunch lines on a sunny day, numerous food-cart blogs and web sites, as well as local and national media attention<sup>1</sup>. Recently, Willamette Week hosted an "Eat Mobile" event to celebrate food cart culture in Portland. More than 800 hungry fans attended the event, and food quickly ran out.<sup>2</sup> While the industry has thus far operated with minimal controversy, the media has covered some conflicts between food cart owners and storefront business owners, some of whom perceive carts to be unfair competition.<sup>3</sup>

In January 2008, the Urban Vitality Group (UVG) teamed with the City of Portland, Bureau of Planning to undertake an exploratory study of Portland's emerging food cart industry. UVG's research questions regarding the effects of food carts on neighborhood livability, as well as the industry's potential for creating beneficial entrepreneurial opportunities, are particularly relevant to the values identified by Portlanders in the VisionPDX project – community connectedness and distinctiveness, equity and access, and sustainability. The findings and recommendations of the Food Cartology project provide insight into what role food can play in promoting these values as the city updates its Comprehensive Plan and Central City Plan.

## Project Goals

The Food Cartology project is a study of the state of the food cart industry in Portland, as well as an investigation into how customers, non-customers, neighboring businesses, and other stakeholders perceive the industry. In partnership with the City of Portland Bureau of Planning, UVG studied the economic and social implications of Portland's growing food cart industry, to determine if carts are a possible avenue for furthering these city objectives. The main goals of the project were to answer the following study questions:

- **Neighborhood Livability:** What effects do food carts have on street vitality and neighborhood life? What are the positive and negative impacts of food carts on the community?
- **Community Economic Development:** To what extent do food carts serve as an entry-point into long-term business ownership? Do carts provide beneficial economic opportunities for residents of Portland?

Based on this analysis, UVG made recommendations to promote the benefits of the industry and mitigate any negative impacts, particularly supporting the VisionPDX values.

# Introduction

## Study Questions

The study questions provided guidance for UVG to assemble relevant information through literature review, primary data collection, and stakeholder input. This information enabled UVG to develop findings that synthesized the results, highlight how food carts can benefit the community as well as identify challenges they may present. Contextualizing the study questions in academic literature and public policy goals elucidates how the methodologies were designed and the rationale that guided the determination of the study findings.

*"Lowly, unpurposeful and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow"*

— Jane Jacobs (1961)

*"Vendors have become the caterers of the city's outdoor life"*

— William H. Whyte (1980)

**Neighborhood Livability.** Substantial research has demonstrated that urban design and surrounding land uses have a significant impact on the liveliness of streets and public interactions.<sup>4</sup> A recent study on microscale physical characteristics of commercial streets found that personalization of storefront design increases pedestrian social behavior.<sup>5</sup> Whyte (1980) referred to the "optical leverage" of food carts as spaces where people gather while waiting for food, which in turn attracts more people.<sup>6</sup> Vacant lots and parking lots can create 'gaps' in the pedestrian environment, reducing 'eyes on the street.' This decreases safety or perceptions of safety, deterring people from walking in these areas. Interim uses of such vacant land can benefit the public while the market may not support additional investments.

According to an Oregonian article, a business owner near a new cluster of food carts on Hawthorne Blvd. acknowledged that the carts have increased his business due to the popularity of the carts.<sup>7</sup>

The City of Portland is currently involved in a long-range planning project, called the Portland Plan, in which staff will consider ways of using sidewalk space to benefit communities.<sup>8</sup> The Plan will promote place-making, especially in neighborhood business districts, which can reinforce community identity and character, foster community connections, attract the creative class, and encourage knowledge workers, potentially leading to regional economic growth<sup>9</sup>. The Portland Plan's Comprehensive Plan evaluation draft report considers compact, pedestrian-friendly corridors as crucial elements of fostering a livable community.

On the other hand, some storefront owners have expressed concern that food carts have an unfair advantage because of their reduced regulatory costs and lack of System Development Charges (SDCs).<sup>10</sup> UVG conducted surveys and interviews of food cart customers and non-customers as well as neighboring business owners and inventoried the physical amenities of carts, to gain a more complete understanding of how food carts impact street vitality and contribute to neighborhood environments.



Image source: Willamette Week



# Introduction

**Community Economic Development.** Community economic development can be defined as, “actions taken by an organization representing an urban neighborhood or rural community in order to

1. *Improve the economic situation of local residents (disposable income and assets) and local businesses (profitability and growth); and*
2. *Enhance the community’s quality of life as a whole (appearance, safety, networks, gathering places, and sense of positive momentum)<sup>13</sup>*

The City of Portland previously lacked information regarding the food cart industry, as carts are not included in the City’s annual business inventory because of their temporary and mobile nature. In other cities, several organizations have identified the food cart industry’s potential for supporting recent immigrants and low-income minorities – the New York City-based Street Vendor Project has a website with resources to aid vendors<sup>14</sup> and a Roxbury, Massachusetts organization began the Village Pushcarts project to provide opportunities to residents without job skills or capital to start their own businesses.<sup>15</sup> Recognizing the potential for the food cart sector to provide a viable means for low-income women to open their own businesses and support their families, Hacienda CDC is in its second year of offering a micro-enterprise food vendor program in Portland.

Food carts may fill a niche for workforce development strategies to offer equitable economic opportunities, which is a major aim of the Portland Plan. The technical working group has identified the need to “ensure economic opportunity is available to a diversifying population.”<sup>16</sup> Finally, the economic report recommends fostering “a supportive climate for small and micro business development.”<sup>17</sup>

*Micro-enterprise is typically defined as a business with five or fewer employees requires initial capital of less than \$35,000, and can be considered part of either formal or informal economy. Oregon is considered a small business state with more than 90 percent of all business enterprises employing 20 or fewer people<sup>11</sup>. In Portland in 2002, of the 51,000 firms in the five-county area, nearly 39,000 had fewer than 10 employees providing more than 103,000 jobs<sup>12</sup>. Food carts are one type of micro-enterprise business that may provide entrepreneurial opportunities for local residents, especially providing avenues for low-income and minority communities to raise their quality of life.*

## The Food Cart Industry in Portland and Elsewhere

While the presence of food carts has been receiving more attention recently, it is by no means a new phenomenon. Portland provided spaces for food carts as early as 1912, when Italian immigrant Joseph Gatto sold produce door-to-door from a horse-drawn cart in Sellwood and Northwest Portland. Even then, carts served as stepping-stones into storefront businesses. In the 1930’s he incorporated his cartbased business into a produce warehouse, and in 1935 the Southeast Portland-based Gatto & Sons wholesale produce company was born, and remains a successful business today.



*This horse-vending cart was parked at Southeast Clay and 7th Ave in 1929  
Photo source: Oregon Historical Society*

# Introduction

Currently, cities across the nation are using street vending as a way to provide diverse, affordable and quick food options. Municipalities can utilize food carts to accomplish city goals, and some have attempted to reduce conflicts by curtailing the presence of carts. Some recent street vendor policies include the following:

- In New York City, the Green Cart legislation allows new street vendors to acquire a license only if they sell fresh produce in low-income neighborhoods. This policy increases access to fresh food in neighborhoods with limited proximity to grocery stores.<sup>18</sup>
- In Toronto, a pilot project is looking into expanding street vending beyond the current limitation to hot dog vending. The City hopes to reflect its cultural diversity, build its image as a culinary destination, and increase access to a greater diversity of fast food options by encouraging vendors to sell pre-cooked pizza, samosas, burritos, and hamburgers. A university design competition created modern uniform street vending carts, which the city will rent to 15 vendors.<sup>19</sup>

- In downtown Seattle, street vending is currently limited to flowers, coffee, and hot dogs. The City is reevaluating its prohibition on street vendors selling food in downtown as part of their street activation program.<sup>20</sup>

Several other cities are considering ways of substantially reducing the numbers of or eliminating food carts all together through regulation:

- In Los Angeles County, a regulation was recently passed that requires mobile eateries to move location every hour. The regulation was driven by brick-and-mortar restaurants in East L.A. who complained that taco trucks were negatively impacting their businesses. Remaining in the same place for more than an hour is now a criminal misdemeanor enforceable by \$1000 or six months in jail.<sup>21</sup>
- A similar regulation was passed in Hillsboro, Oregon in 2000 requiring taco trucks to move every two hours.<sup>22</sup> This regulation severely limits the operation and profitability of carts.

When considering how to deal with the day-to-day management of food carts, jurisdictions can regulate them based on strictly-defined rules or more flexible standards. Areas of potential regulation can include the spatial location of food carts, placement and space allocation on a site, number of licenses available, types of goods that can be sold, and cart design.<sup>23</sup> While each jurisdiction handles street vending differently, the City of Portland's approach has encouraged the recent growth of carts on privately-owned commercial land, rather than on sidewalks. Because the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) and Multnomah County Health Department (MCHD) have minimal staff to regulate carts, issues about electricity or wastewater disposal are only addressed on a complaint-driven basis.



# Introduction

## Regulatory Issues

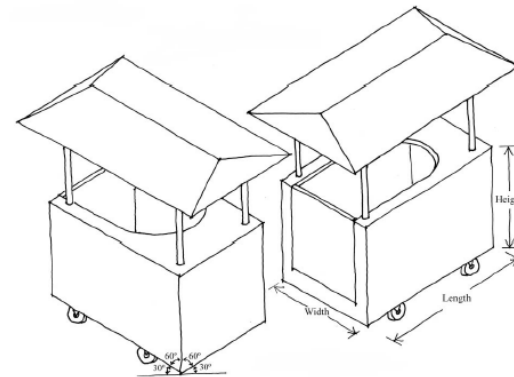
There are a number of common regulatory misunderstandings or concerns, which should be considered in the context of this study. UVG investigated the impacts of regulations to vendors and the public only insofar as they affect the study questions of neighborhood livability and community economic development. As it is beyond the scope of this study to comprehensively evaluate existing regulations, the impacts of the regulatory environment are discussed only when stakeholders addressed them in surveys or interviews. The following are a few existing regulations that help contextualize the project.

**Food Safety.** MCHD regulates food carts in the same way that all businesses that prepare and sell food products are regulated and all vendors must have a Food Handlers' license. MCHD is responsible for preventing food-borne disease and injury and for inspecting all restaurants, including food vendors, two times per year.

**Push Carts vs. Stationary Mobile Carts.** Push carts in the public right-of-way have different regulations than stationary mobile carts located on private property. The Portland Department of Transportation (PDOT) regulates temporary structures in the right-of-way, including push carts. While the City of Portland does not currently restrict the number of food carts in the region, PDOT strictly specifies how many push carts can locate on each block, the appropriate distance between carts, and minimum setbacks from the road and surrounding buildings. Push carts must also be approved through Design Review at the Bureau of Development Services.

As long as stationary mobile carts have functional wheels, an axle for towing, and are located in a commercial zone, they are considered vehicles and are not required to conform to the zoning or building code. They must have electrical or plumbing permits if sewer hook-ups or electricity are installed in the cart. If the wheels and/or axle are removed, the owner must obtain a building permit and conform to zoning code requirements and building inspections.

*Despite the persistent misconception that food carts are under-regulated, the Multnomah County Health Department regulates carts in the same way that all businesses that prepare and sell food are regulated.*



Pushcart vendors need to provide a sketch of their proposed carts to be considered for approval by the City.

Source: Portlandonline.com



# Methodology

A variety of data collection techniques were developed to answer the study questions for the project. The City of Portland previously had little information regarding the food cart industry, as carts are not included in the City's annual business survey. The following definitions and methodologies were used to gain an industry-wide 'snapshot' of food carts in the City of Portland, and to conduct an in-depth comparison of a sample of four cart clusters.

## Definition of Food Carts for the Study

Based on information from the organizations that regulate the food cart industry within the Portland metropolitan area, UVG defines food carts for the purpose of the Food Cartology project as follows:



**Push Carts** are small carts that are mobile and occupy a temporary location in the public right-of-way while they are operational



**Stationary Mobile Carts** have functional wheels and an axle, but occupy one, semi-permanent location.

Depending on the type of cart, different regulations apply, as outlined in the regulatory context section. This study surveyed push carts and stationary mobile carts, which have regular locations. Fixed carts without wheels and mobile carts that travel from site to site were excluded from this study, as they are subject to additional regulations and therefore have more barriers to market entry.

## Literature Review

A review of existing literature helped indicate how food carts may contribute to creating neighborhood livability, to investigate available micro-enterprise opportunities, and to outline the possible ways a city can regulate the food cart industry. The literature review also guided the development of measurable indicators to create the survey instruments and interview questionnaires. In this way, the survey and interview questions were linked to concrete studies and theories, ensuring their capacity to address the study questions. This research also informed and framed the recommendations.

## Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was comprised of professionals in the areas of economic development, urban design, livability, development regulation, micro-enterprise assistance, and others, in addition to food cart owners. The committee convened twice through the process; first to discuss the research questions and methodology, and second to review the findings and deliberate on the recommendations.

# Methodology



## Regulatory Session

UVG organized and facilitated a meeting with the City of Portland and Multnomah County Health Division employees who license, inspect, and regulate food carts. The meeting was an opportunity to gain insight into the issues and concerns of those who work with regulating food carts. A complete list of the attendees can be found in Appendix A.

All survey instruments can be found in Appendix B following.

## Industry Overview

**Mapping.** UVG obtained a database of the Food Handlers' license inventory from MCHD for licensed "mobile units." The following carts were removed from the data set prior to mapping: inactive mobile units; mobile units noted as "not in operation during inspection;" and drive-thru coffee carts (determined using GoogleMaps viewer and on-site inspections). A number of the cart locations could not be geocoded due to incomplete address information. Of the 470 mobile units originally included in the database, 170 push carts and stationary mobile units remained. These carts were then mapped using Geographical Information System (GIS).

**Vendor Survey.** Vendors were asked about their motivations for opening a food cart business, difficulties they had experienced, and what assistance they may have received. The surveys were translated into Spanish, and UVG team members filled out surveys for vendors who required assistance with English.

With a population of 170 carts, team members attempted to survey 97 carts altogether. Of these, 38 were not open, not at their specified location, or were determined

to not fit the definition of food carts outlined above. Another five vendors declined participation. In total, 54 surveys were completed.

**Site and Cart Inventories.** UVG inventoried the physical characteristics of the four study sites, including publicly-provided amenities. Carts were surveyed for physical condition such as the exterior of the cart, awnings, signage, and privately-provided amenities, such as trees, benches, and trash cans. Both study sites and additional carts were inventoried.

**Online Survey.** An online survey gathered perceptions of food carts from the general population. It was hosted on the website [www.foodcartsportland.com](http://www.foodcartsportland.com) and was linked from [www.portlandfoodanddrink.com](http://www.portlandfoodanddrink.com). Many of the questions were similar to the public intercept survey, but focused more generally on the cart industry. 474 people responded to this survey, 450 of whom responded that they eat at food carts, and 24 of whom do not consider themselves food cart consumers. Because this sample contains strong food-cart biases and is restricted to online responses, these results were not combined with those from the public intercept survey.

# Methodology

## Site Analyses

After consulting with the Bureau of Planning and the TAC, UVG selected four study sites that represent the diversity of the neighborhoods where food carts are currently located, as well as differing typologies of cart clusters.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Selected Cart Sites**

Site	Typology	# of Carts
Downtown 5th & Oak	Dense cluster in central business district	20
Mississippi	Corridor along neighborhood commercial street	4
Sellwood	Smaller cluster on one site	3
Cully	Scattered carts within walking distance	3

At each of the study sites, UVG conducted vendor surveys, neighborhood business surveys, public intercept surveys, and site and cart inventories, as well as conducting interviews with individuals from

each of these groups. GIS was used to map area demographics and surrounding land uses. The following methods were additionally used to gather data at each study site:

**Public Intercept Surveys.** Approximately 30 pedestrians near each of the four study sites were surveyed to assess perceptions about the impacts the carts have in the neighborhood. In order to survey both customers and non-customers, half of these surveys were gathered near the cart location, while the other half were administered off-site, usually near an alternative eating establishment. Additionally, random intercept surveys were conducted at Lloyd Center and Pioneer square. When the results refer to the public “overall,” the statistics are referring to all sites as well as these two additional locations.

**Neighborhood Business Survey.** UVG attempted to survey the manager or owner of every storefront retail business located on blocks adjacent to the food cart study site. This survey gauged attitudes toward and perceptions of the food carts’ effects on businesses in the neighborhood.

**Table 2: Survey Response Rates**

	Downtown		Mississippi		Sellwood		Cully		Overall	
	Delivered	Completed	Delivered	Completed	Delivered	Completed	Delivered	Completed	Delivered	Completed
Vendors	19	14	2	3	3	3	5	4	126	78
Neighborhood Business	27	21	17	9	23	14	21	16	85	63
Public Intercept	-	44	-	32	-	27	-	23	-	215

*Note: The overall public intercept surveys include the 89 surveys collected at Pioneer Square and Lloyd Center*



# Methodology

## Interviews

Interviews were designed to supplement the surveys by providing insight into the perspectives, opinions, and interests of stakeholders, especially those who do not fit into easily-defined survey populations. Allowing individuals to speak in a personal and in-depth manner also revealed different insights and provided a more personal perspective. Interviews were conducted in person or by phone, and notes were input into a spreadsheet and analyzed to identify recurring themes. The information derived from the interviews helped shape the findings and recommendations, particularly when survey information was unavailable or insufficient. A complete list of interviewees can be found in Appendix C.



## Cost of Doing Business Comparison

Using data and information provided by Mercy Corps Northwest, the Bureau of Planning, Portland Development Commission, as well as results from interviews and vendor surveys, UVG developed a list of traditional line items that new business start-ups can anticipate as typical baseline costs, depending on if the business is based in a push cart, a stationary mobile cart, or a storefront restaurant. This information informs the community economic development findings and indicates the financial differences between operating a food cart and small scale storefront start-ups.

## Study Limitations

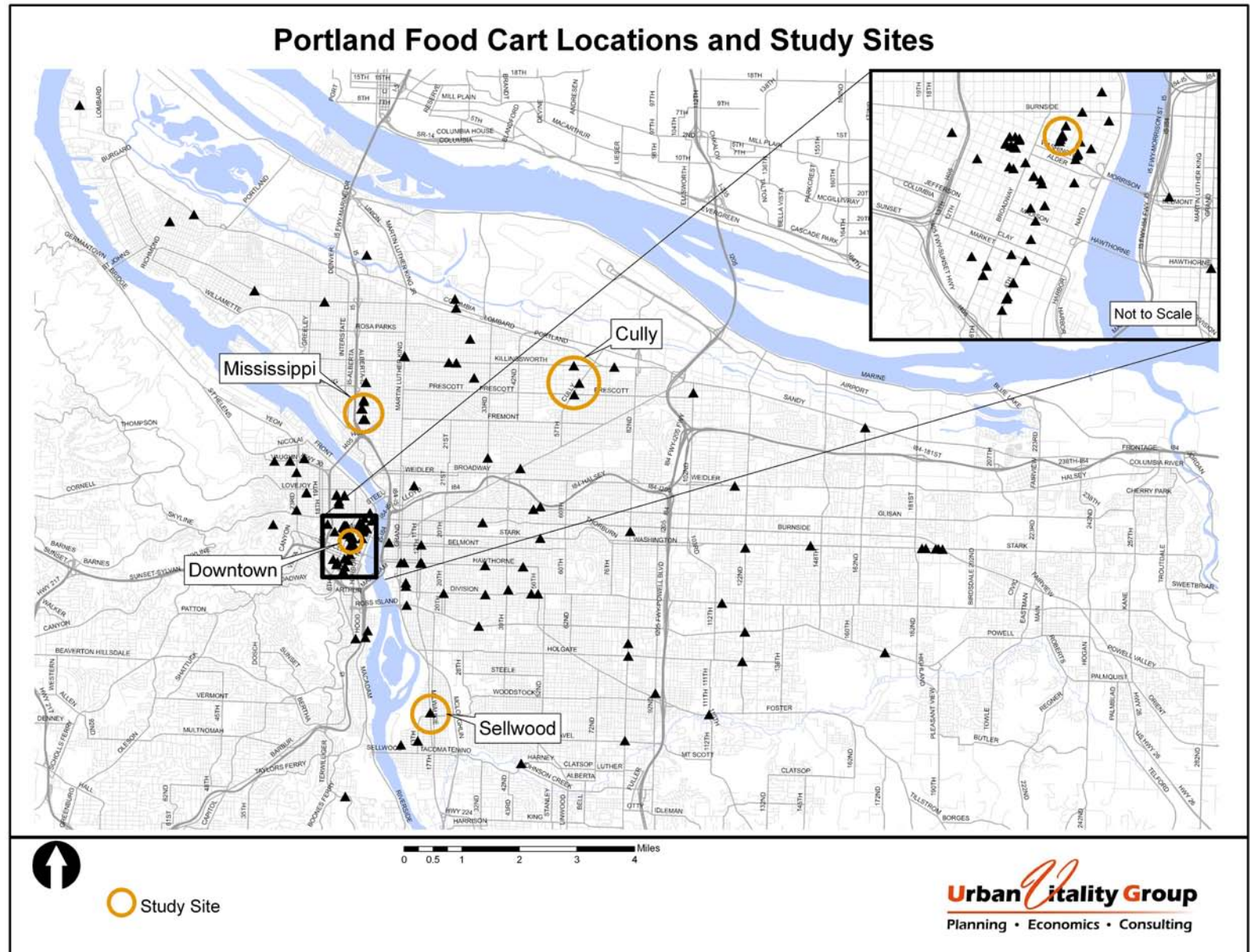
Despite UVG's best efforts, this study contains some limitations, especially in the data collection process. The majority of food cart vendors were willing to complete surveys; however, there were specific questions regarding gross profits, employee data, and other information that vendors either may have misinterpreted or were unwilling to share. The interviews gathered some of this information by building more trust, but the sample size was quite small. Additionally, the public intercept surveys were likely biased, as most of the people willing to complete the survey were interested in food carts. Finally, the sample sizes are small and provide a snap-shot analysis of food carts and public perceptions, rather than being statistically significant.

# Site Analysis

Location of push carts and stationary mobile carts in Portland.

Data source:  
Multnomah County  
Health Department

170 Food carts  
24 Nationalities  
64% Of customers  
want recyclable to-go  
containers  
\$1- Typical recent  
increase in a lunch  
special due to the  
increased cost of  
grain





# Site Analysis-Downtown



## Neighborhood Context:

The first of Portland's food cart clusters, these carts are an epicenter of pedestrian activity in the area. The food carts in downtown Portland are quite popular, and it is common to see lines of ten or more people at a cart waiting for lunch. The downtown area has a significant residential population and a high employment density, especially near the study site cluster at 5th and Oak. The area is also undergoing significant changes. A new park is under construction, multiple buildings are currently being renovated or built, and a \$200 million transit mall improvement project is underway.

**Food carts on site since:** Approximately 2000

**Current Number of Carts on site:** 20

**Owner:** City Center Parking, The Goodman Family

**Site Future:** There are no current plans to develop the site, although it is along the future transit mall and pedestrian safety concerns may be addressed.

**Lease Terms:** \$550/month includes electricity, fresh water, security, and pest control. Carts are responsible for waste water removal and trash disposal

**Site Improvements:** ATM on site. The renovation of the transit mall includes plans to install several decorative glass and metal panels along the outside border of the sidewalk at this site.

## Downtown (5th and Oak)

Population	10,070	Crimes per 1000 people <sup>24</sup>	282
People in Poverty	31%	Percent population within ½ mile of grocery store <sup>25</sup>	76%
People of Color	26%		
Employees in Market Area <sup>26</sup>	31,071	Upper Income Households (\$125k+)	4%



# Site Analysis-Downtown



Ana Maria  
Loco Locos Burritos

*Locos Locos Burritos began operating at the parking lot on SW 5th Avenue seven years ago. After working in the service industry for several years, Ana Maria and her boyfriend decided to open a food cart. The food cart would combine two of their existing talents since her boyfriend likes to cook and Ana Maria is “very good with people.” They saved money to purchase a cart without loans or other financial assistance and renovated the kitchen for full-time use.*

*After five years of hard work and saving they were able to expand and open a second Loco Locos Burritos location at SW 9th and Alder Street, also located downtown. The second location has also been very successful. When asked how they measure the success of their business, Ana Maria responded that independence and the ability to spend time with her family are important to her. They are currently in the process of expanding their business into a storefront near Portland State University campus, while continuing to operate their two existing carts. Ana Maria was the only food cart owner that was identified through the research with immediate plans to expand into a storefront.*

## Key Findings:

- **Limited shelter and seating:** customers responded most frequently that food carts in the downtown site could be improved by providing shelter (42%). The only sheltered eating area at the downtown site is at the New Taste of India cart. The cluster had the fewest average seats per cart with only .5 per cart compared to an average of 5 seats per cart overall.
- **Customers want the carts to stay open late:** the other most-often cited improvement was for the carts to operate evening hours (42%).
- **Downtown is the least social site of those surveyed:** only 39% of customers surveyed at the downtown site indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: *I have conversations with other customers at food carts*, compared to 51% overall.
- **Downtown carts increase foot traffic:** 58% of businesses strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *The presence of food carts has increased foot traffic on the street*.
- **Carts are more profitable downtown than ones located outside the CBD:** 92% of downtown vendors strongly agree or agree that the cart has been a good way to support themselves and their families, and 60% report being able to save money for a rainy day.
- **Downtown carts are more stable:** on average, carts downtown have been in operation since 2003, compared to 2006 for the overall population. Downtown carts may be less likely to move into a storefront: only 42% plan to move into a storefront in the future, compared with 51% in the overall population, and much higher percentages at the other study sites.

*“Food carts are a Petri dish for the organic growth of restaurants.”*

*-Mark Goodman, property owner of food cart site*

# Site Analysis-Mississippi



## Neighborhood Context:

Mississippi Street is a harbor for hip restaurants, boutiques and most recently condos and apartments under rapid-fire construction. Long the home of Portland's African-American community, Boise is now experiencing significant demographic shifts. The previously low-income neighborhood is now seeing home values rise and incumbent residents are faced with steeper rents, the specter of displacement and commercial changes catering to higher income levels.

**Food carts first located on site:** 2004, 2007

**Current Number of Carts on site:** 3 (on separate lots)

**Owner:** Multiple property owners associated with food cart locations.

**Site Future:** Two of the sites are slated for redevelopment in the near future. One cart is considering moving into the storefront, while the other is looking for a new site.

**Lease Terms:** Annual lease, \$300/month, access to fresh water, electricity, and waste water disposal.

**Site Improvements:** varies

## Boise Neighborhood

Population	3,090	Crimes per 1000 people	119
People in Poverty	30%	Percent population within ½ mile of grocery store	0%
People of Color	67%		
Employees in Market Area	1,855	Upper Income Households (\$125k+)	1%



Judith Stokes  
Tita's Pista

*Judy entered the food cart business partly because of her mother. "She is from the Philippines and I learned how to cook from her. I want to share the food from my mother's home country with the community."*

*It was hard for Judy to find a location for her cart. Mississippi is a rapidly developing area, and many property owners are expecting to develop their properties. "A lot of people turned me down. Mississippi is developing so fast and many property owners are selling their property. When I asked them to lease me their land for a few hundred dollars a month, they were laughing at me." Even the current location is not stable: the landlord is going to develop the site and Judy will have to move to another location, which will cost her more than \$2,000.*

# Site Analysis-Mississippi

## Key findings:

- **The top concern of Mississippi customers was for the carts to stay open in the evening:** 54% of customers would like the carts to stay open later.
- **Mississippi carts are the most appealing:** 80% of those surveyed found the cart exteriors appealing compared to 52% overall.
- **Surrounding businesses support the food carts:** 81% of surrounding businesses surveyed in Mississippi indicate that they have a very positive or positive perception of the food carts compared to 66% overall.
- **Cart operators have a strong relationship with their customers:** 82% of customers stated that they strongly agree or agree with the statement, *I have conversations with the operator other than ordering food, compared to 66% overall.*
- **Customers at the Mississippi carts eat there infrequently:** 59% of customers indicated that they eat at food carts less than once a week compared to 38% overall.
- **The Mississippi site is very social:** 71% of customers in Mississippi, indicate that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: *I have conversations with other customers at food carts*, compared to 55% overall. Sixty-three percent of customers in Mississippi indicate that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: *I have met new people while patronizing food carts, compared to 40% overall.*
- **The Mississippi site had the most seating** with an average of 11 per cart compared to an overall average of 5 per cart.
- **Mississippi carts are a good place to people-watch:** 46% of customers at the Mississippi site did indicate that they go to food carts to people watch compared to only 14% overall.
- **There is a different demographic mix than downtown:** there are no taquerias along the Mississippi corridor, and all of the vendors were born in the U.S.
- **Cart owners have good relationships with their landlords:** all three cart vendors strongly agreed that they have friendly relationships with their landlords.



# Site Analysis-Sellwood



## Sellwood-Moreland Neighborhood Demographics

Population	10,590	Crimes per 1000 people	55
People in Poverty	9%	Percent population within ½ mile of grocery store	74%
People of Color	11%		
Employees in Market Area	2,983	Upper Income Households (\$125k+)	5%

### Neighborhood Context

The Sellwood neighborhood is a destination for antique collectors with dozens of antique shops in Victorian homes and renovated storefronts that line SE 13th Ave. Considered by many to be one of Portland's most family-friendly neighborhoods, Sellwood-Moreland has the lowest crime rate and lowest poverty rate of the four study sites.

**Food carts first located on site:** 2007

**Current Number of Carts on site:** 4

**Owner:** Mark Gearhart (Also owns adjacent antique store)

**Site Future:** In the immediate future the site will remain a food cart court, but it is for sale for the right price. Farmers' market vendors can also rent space

**Lease Terms:** Annual lease, \$449/month plus \$50 for electricity and a \$500 one time hook-up fee.

**Site Improvements:** Gravel and bark surface provided, electrical hookups, waste water disposal, storage sheds for rent, picnic tables, trash dumpsters for food carts.



Mark Gearhart  
Property Owner  
Sellwood Site

Mark Gearhart, owner of the Sellwood Antique Mall for 19 years, decided to do something with the adjacent empty gravel lot. Unable to turn it into a parking lot due to the cost of complying with storm water regulations, he decided to create Sellwood's very own food cart court. He laid down gravel and bark and installed electrical, fresh water, and wastewater hook ups. He offers the carts one-year leases and has built storage facilities so the carts can store their food on-site. He provides picnic tables, trash, and recycling facilities. He spent over \$7,000 improving the site. While Mark admits his lot will not remain a food cart site forever, in the interim he will increase his cash flow and earn back the investment he made to the property. Mark has created a model for creating an intentional, well-maintained lot, and he strongly feels that food carts should not be more heavily regulated. He also owns a lot at SE 33rd and Hawthorne, where he would like to create another food cart plaza.

# Site Analysis-Sellwood

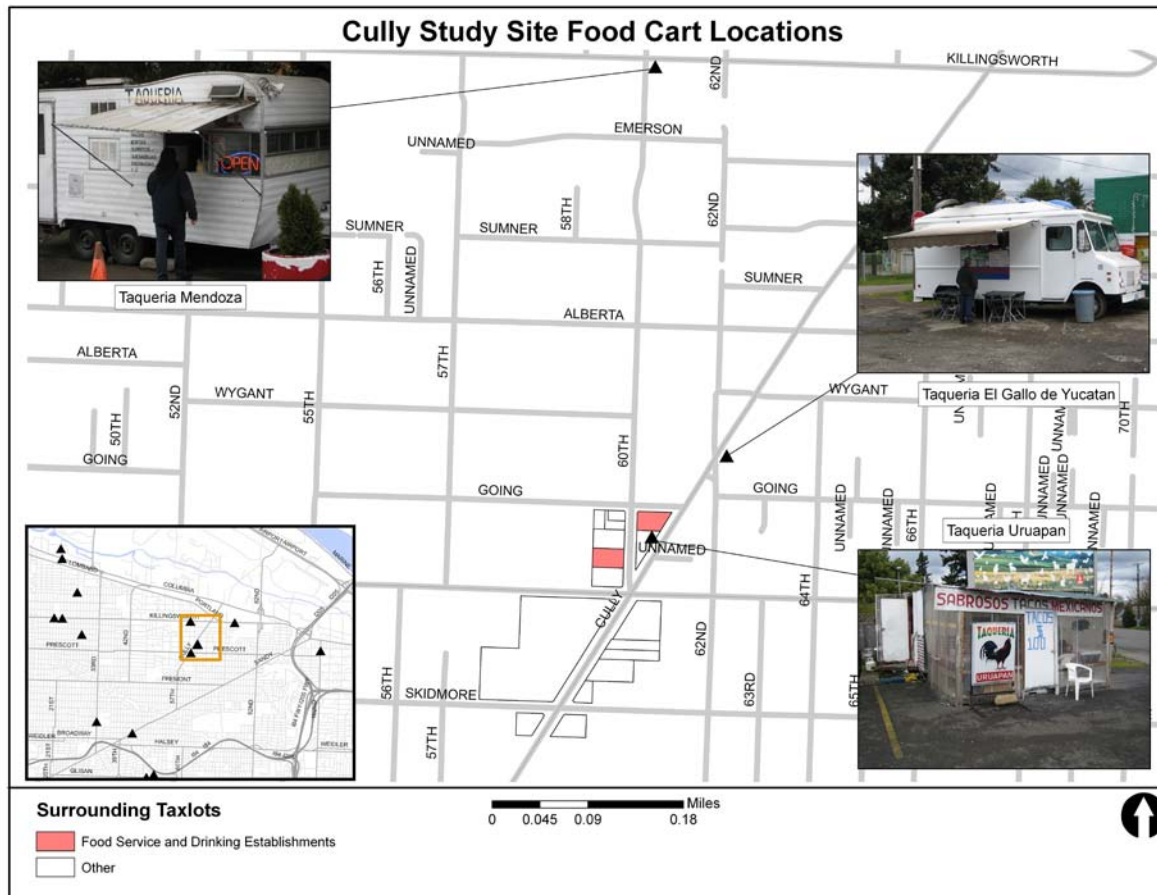
## Key findings:

- **Recycling is important to Sellwood customers:** according to the customers surveyed, the most important improvement that food carts could make was to use recyclable containers (42% of customers said that this was important).
- **Customers have strong relationship with the food cart vendors:** 89% of customers surveyed in Sellwood stated that they strongly agree or agree with the statement: *I have conversations with the operator other than ordering food*, compared to 66% overall.
- **Customers eat infrequently at food carts:** in Sellwood, 89% of customers eat at food carts less than once a week compared to 38% overall.
- **The Sellwood site is visually appealing:** according the public surveys, the Sellwood site was the second most appealing of all the sites studied.
- **Outdoor seating is important to Sellwood customers:** 43% of customers report eating at the Sellwood carts because of the availability of outdoor seating.
- **Vendors at the Sellwood site consider the cart a stepping-stone:** two of the three carts surveyed report planning to move into a storefront, while the last cart is operated by a retiree who has been traveling with his cart for years.

*"Food Carts add an element of controlled chaos and break the monotony of the built environment."*

*-Mark Gearhart, property owner*

# Site Analysis-Cully



## Neighborhood Context:

Cully is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Portland, with people of color comprising nearly half of Cully's population. The presence of Latino culture is evident by the several "mercados" and food carts that dot the area. The lack of sidewalks along Cully Boulevard poses a significant challenge to the area's walkability. There is a dangerous five-street intersection that is a significant barrier and is difficult to cross. Local independent businesses, including food carts, are an important part of the mix of land uses that offers Cully residents places to gather and meet their food needs locally.

**Food carts first located on site:** Approximately 2002

**Current Number of Carts on site:** 3 (on separate lots)

**Owner:** Gerald Kieffer

**Site Future:** Mr. Kieffer's plan is to establish four "trolley car carts" on the site and establish a food cart court. Additionally, a Cully Green Street Plan is currently in its initial phase and will likely result in improved pedestrian safety.

**Lease Terms:** Month-to-Month. \$550/month, water is included. Vendors pay separately for electricity, and take care of their own waste water removal and trash disposal.

**Site Improvements:** Currently a paved parking lot with limited site improvements. Taqueria Uruapan provides a small sheltered and heated dining space.

## Cully Neighborhood

Population	13,000	Crimes per 1000 people	67
People in Poverty	18%	Percent population within ½ mile of grocery store <sup>27</sup>	24%
Latino Population	20%		
Employees in Market Area	4,401	Upper Income Households (\$125k+)	2%



# Site Analysis-Cully



Bartolo and Araceli  
Taquería Uruapan

Taquería Uruapan is truly a family-run business. Bartolo and his wife Araceli run their food cart with dedication. Operating their cart more than 12 hours a day, the couple has turned it into a tiny dining area protected from the elements that creates a friendly atmosphere for sharing food and conversation. The couple moved to Oregon from California after taco carts were banned in their city. They originally migrated from Mexico and took over the food cart operation from Araceli's brother who had started it five years earlier. They have been held-up three times in the past eight months, and the crime in the area creates an on-going issue.

The family struggles to make ends meet, making just enough money to pay their bills. During winter months when business is slow, they rely on the small savings they had before moving to Oregon to survive. Their future as cart vendors is also uncertain: the current site is temporary, and the property owner has no long-term intentions of allowing food carts. They continue to rent the cart from Araceli's brother, but hope to save enough money to someday buy their own cart and have a self-sufficient business.

## Key findings:

- **The Cully site was the least visually appealing of all sites:** only 30% of those surveyed found the exterior of the carts appealing compared to 52% overall.
- **Food cart customers do not walk to the Cully site:** only 25% of food cart customers indicated that they walk to the carts in Cully.
- **The Cully site is very social:** 63% of respondents in Cully agree or strongly agree with the statement: *I have conversations with other customers at food carts* compared to 51% overall. Another 63% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement: *I have become better acquainted with people while patronizing food carts* compared to 42% overall. Eighty-one percent of customers surveyed either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *I have a good relationship with one or more food cart operator* compared to 51% overall.
- **The relationship with the Cully carts and surrounding businesses seems strained:** only 43% of businesses surveyed have a very positive or positive perception of food carts compared to 66% overall. Three-quarters of business owners stated that their employees never eat at food carts. None of the businesses agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I have a good relationship with the food cart operators*, compared to 55% of businesses at all the sites.

*Food carts bring value to surrounding properties. They provide a service and employment. As long as it is done right and run nice.*

*-Gerald Kieffer, property owner*

# Findings

*"Food Carts bring more people to an area and create a neutral space where people can gather on the street and socialize."*  
—Paul Basset, Avalon Vintage



Based on the results of the surveys, inventories, and interviews, both for the four study sites and the overall population, UVG assembled the following key findings that answer the study questions. Following the summary of the findings is a discussion of the data results that provide support for these statements.

1. Food carts have positive impacts on street vitality and neighborhood life in lower density residential neighborhoods as well as in the high density downtown area.
2. When a cluster of carts is located on a private site, the heightened intensity of use can negatively impact the surrounding community, primarily from the lack of trash cans.
3. A cart's exterior appearance does not affect social interactions or the public's overall opinion of the carts; seating availability is more important for promoting social interaction than the appearance of the cart's exterior.
4. The presence of food carts on a site does not appear to hinder its development.
5. Food carts represent beneficial employment opportunities because they provide an improved quality of life and promote social interactions between owners and customers.
6. Despite the beneficial opportunities that food carts can provide, there are numerous challenges to owning a food cart.
7. While many food cart owners want to open storefront businesses, there is a considerable financial leap from a food cart operation to opening a storefront.
8. Food cart owners do not frequently access small business development resources available to them, such as bank loans and other forms of assistance.

## Neighborhood Livability



The study questions relating to street vitality and neighborhood livability were:

**What effects do food carts have on street vitality and neighborhood life?**

**What are the positive and negative impacts of food carts on the community?**

1. Food carts have positive impacts on street vitality and neighborhood life in lower density residential neighborhoods as well as in the high density downtown area.

*They provide affordable and convenient food options, create opportunity for social interaction, improve public safety by increasing 'eyes on the street,' and help to facilitate a pedestrian-friendly urban environment.*

### Pedestrian Access

- **Most customers walk to food cart sites:** 65% of customers indicated that they walk to food carts. 62% of all sites have a crosswalk to the site.
- **Sites tend to have good pedestrian access:** 76% of sites are located on streets where the speed limit is less than 30 MPH. Only 9% of respondents in the public survey indicated that pedestrian sidewalk clearance is a concern.
- **Cart customers may impede sidewalks:** two Portland urban designers interviewed cautioned about the importance that customer lines not block pedestrian flow or obscure storefront businesses.

### Perceptions of Safety

- **There are mixed opinions about whether the presence of food carts makes the site safer:** 59% of respondents to the public survey either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *The presence of food carts makes the street feel safer* – compared to only 28% of businesses. However, the majority of the five business owners who were interviewed indicated that the presence of food carts makes the area safer.

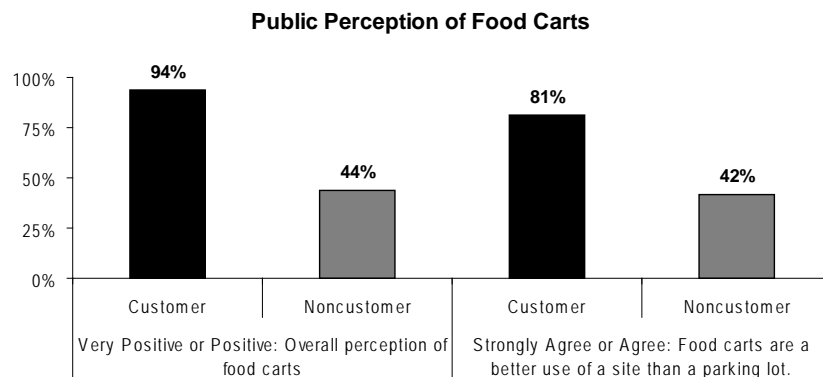


# Findings

## Neighborhood Livability

### Venues for Informal Social Interaction

- **Customers have informal conversations at carts:** half of customers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I have conversations with other customers at food carts.*
- **Customers and vendors tend to have good relationships:** 66% of customers surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *I have conversations with the operator other than ordering food.* Half of customers surveyed either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *I have a good relationship with one or more food cart operators.*



### Public Perceptions of Carts

- **Overall perceptions of carts are positive:** 94% of food cart customers surveyed indicated that they have a very positive or positive perception of food carts. 44% of non-customers surveyed also indicated that they have a very positive or positive perception of food carts.
- **Both customers and non-customers say that food carts are a better use of a vacant lot than parking:** 81% of food cart customers and 42% of non-customers either strongly agree or agree with the statement: Food carts are a better use of a site than a parking lot.



*The smell of the food is out in the street; the place can be surrounded with covered seats, sitting walls, places to lean and sip coffee, part of the larger scene, not sealed away in plate glass structure, surrounded by cars. The more they smell the better.*

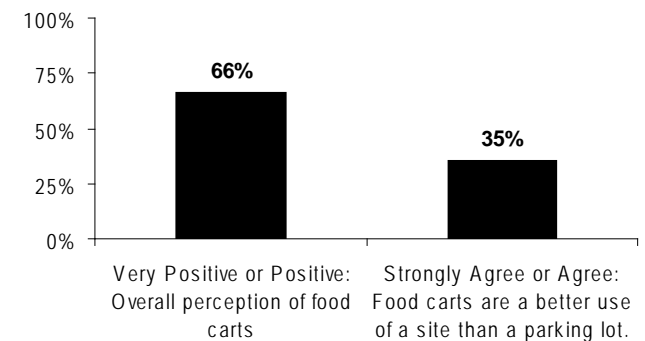
- A Pattern Language

## Neighborhood Livability

### Neighboring Business Perceptions of Carts

- **Managers or owners of surrounding businesses have a positive overall perception of food carts:** Overall, 66% of surrounding businesses surveyed reported a positive or very positive perception of food carts.
- **While owners and managers of restaurants are less likely than other businesses to have a positive impression of food carts in their neighborhood, the majority of them are positive:** 69% of restaurants and 94% of other businesses ranked their overall impression of food carts positive or very positive.
- **Business would prefer parking over food carts:** only 35% of businesses surveyed either strongly agree or agree with the statement: *Food carts are a better use of a site than a parking lot.*
- **Restaurants are less likely than other kinds of businesses to want more food carts in their neighborhoods:** 25% compared to 55% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, *I would like to see more food carts in my neighborhood.* In fact, only 35% of businesses surveyed either agree or strongly agree with the statement: *Food carts are a better use of a site than a parking lot.*
- **Most neighboring businesses did not perceive an impact of the food carts on their businesses:** of the businesses surveyed, only 8% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *my sales have increased because of the presence of food carts.* Only 40% of businesses surveyed either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *the presence of food carts has increased foot traffic on the streets.* However, at the downtown site 58% of business agreed or strongly agreed with that statement.

Surrounding Business Perception of Food Carts



*"Overall, I support food carts, if the product is good, they encourage foot traffic." –Neighboring Business Owner*

*"Food Carts bring more people to an area and create a neutral space where people can gather on the street and socialize." – Neighboring Business Owner*

*"Our business does not compete with food carts. We are a fine dining restaurant. We share customers but they are looking for a different experience at different times." – Neighboring Restaurant Owner*

# Findings

## Neighborhood Livability

2. When a cluster of carts is located on a private site, the heightened intensity of use can negatively impact the surrounding community, primarily from the lack of trash cans.

### Amenities

- **Sites frequently lack publicly-provided amenities:** 86% of cart sites had no publicly provided benches, and 38% of cart sites had no street trees.
- **Food cart owners often provide street amenities including seating, trash cans, and occasionally landscaping:** 73% of cart sites had at least some sun-protected seating area, provided by trees, awnings, or umbrellas. On average, a food cart provides 5 seats. In downtown, the average was 0.5 seats per cart.
- **The majority of cart sites do not have trash cans:** 66% of cart sites had no publicly provided trash cans nearby, and 45% of food carts do not individually provide trash cans for their customers. According to the interviews, there is no incentive to put out a trash can if the neighboring cart is not required to do so.

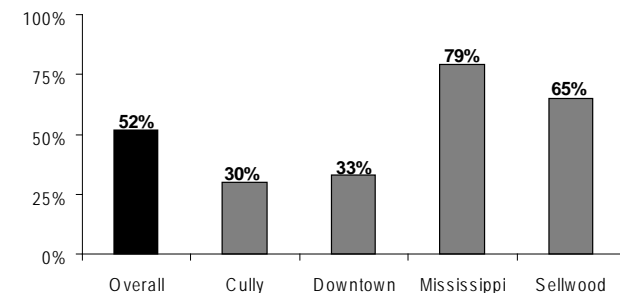
3. The exterior appearance of a cart does not affect social interactions or the public's overall opinion of the carts; seating availability is more important for promoting social interaction than the appearance of the cart's exterior.

### Cart Aesthetic Appearance

- **Overall, people view food carts as aesthetically pleasing:** over half of respondents to the public survey indicated that the cart exterior was visually appealing.

- **Opinions about aesthetics vary between the sites:** the most public intercept respondents found carts at the Mississippi site appealing, followed by Sellwood, Downtown and were least likely to find carts in Cully appealing.
- **The carts are generally in good repair:** the cart inventory found that only 11% of food cart were visibly in disrepair.
- **There is a noticeable smell from food carts, but most people find the smell pleasant:** 65% of respondents in the public survey stated that there is a noticeable smell from food carts and 86% say the smell is pleasant.
- **Food cart sites are not noisy:** 90% of respondents in the public survey and 74% in the business survey indicated that there was no noticeable noise from food carts.

Percent of Public Survey Respondents Who Find the Exterior of Food Carts Appealing by Site





## Neighborhood Livability

### Variations in Social Interactions

- **There is not a strong relationship between public perceptions of cart appearance and reporting on social interactions:** for example, while only 30% of public respondents at the Cully site found the exterior of the carts appealing, 63% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *I have conversations with other customers at the food carts.*
- **Carts with seating availability are more likely to foster social interaction:** at the downtown site, which has an average of less than one seat per cart, only 40% of customers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *I have conversations with other customers at the food carts.* At the Mississippi site, which averaged 13 seats per cart, 71% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

4. The presence of food carts on a site does not appear to hinder its development.

*Although many factors influence how and when a property is developed, property owners interviewed did not feel that the presence of food carts would prevent them from developing the site. Interim uses for parking lots, such as food carts, can be an additional source of income for property owners, facilitate opportunities for social interaction, and increase street activity.*

### Influences on Permanent Site Development

- **Property owners intend to develop food cart sites when the market is ready:** all four property owners indicated that they would develop the property when the market conditions were right. Two sites at Mississippi have immediate plans for redevelopment.
- **Food carts do not tend to locate in areas with many vacant storefronts:** three of the study sites had one or fewer vacant storefronts.

### Online survey Results

To gain a broader perspective of public perceptions of food carts, UVG posted an online public survey, which received 474 completed surveys. Ninety-five percent of respondents were food cart customers, compared to 69% of the public surveyed on the streets. In addition, the population of people who respond to online surveys tend to be self-selected and a different demographic – UVG’s online survey respondents had higher incomes than those randomly intercepted on the street: 40% had a household income of \$75,000 and above, compared to 14% of public intercept respondents. Due to these differences, the results of this survey have been considered separately from the public intercept surveys, and are not part of the “overall” statistics given. The differences between surveys may indicate the extent to which people who eat at carts regularly care about the food carts in Portland.

#### Highlights of the Online Survey:

- 42% of customers eat at food carts 1-2 times per week and 40% eat at carts 3-4 times per week.
- 78% of respondents cited affordability as a reason they patronize food carts.
- 17% of customers said they would eat at food carts if the cart transitioned to a storefront business and the prices were higher.
- Of those who don’t eat at food carts the top concerns were:
  - Concerns with unsafe food handling (63%)
  - Lack of shelter from weather (47%)
  - Unappealing condition of cart (46%)
  - Nowhere to sit (33%)
- The top four ways that food cart customers thought food carts could improve:
  - Provide recyclable containers (64%)
  - Install additional shelter (51%)
  - Open evening hours (46%)
  - Provide seating (35%)
- 82% of customers get their food to go.

# Findings

## Community Economic Development



The study questions that address community economic development potential were:  
**To what extent do food carts serve as an entry-point into long-term business ownership?**  
**Do carts provide beneficial economic opportunities for residents of Portland?**

5. Food carts represent beneficial employment opportunities because they provide an improved quality of life and promote social interactions between owners and customers.

*Food cart owners indicated that independence, flexibility of schedule, and opportunity for family involvement are important to their quality of life. Food carts provide their owners and operators an opportunity to interact with customers in more candid way than storefront restaurants.*

### Characteristics of Vendors

- **Owners of food carts are often minorities and immigrants:** over half of the food cart vendors surveyed outside the CBD are Hispanic, whereas there is a greater mix of ethnicities (Hispanic, Caucasian, and Asian) within the CBD. In addition, more than half (51%) of the vendors surveyed were born outside of the US.

### Financial Success

- **Food cart vendors can mostly support themselves and their families:** 63% of vendors agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *The food cart has been a good way for me to support myself and my family.*
- **Approximately half of vendors own a home:** 49% of the vendors report owning their own home.
- **Several cart owners have other jobs:** 19% of respondents reported having an additional year-round job and another 13% have seasonal jobs in addition to the cart.
- **Push carts and food carts offer a range of start-up costs that require incrementally smaller investments than a small business:** the start-up costs for a small business with one employee is approximately 50% more than those of a high-end food cart (see Table 3).

## Community Economic Development

### Measures of Success

- **Many vendors enter the food cart business (rather than another industry) because of a desire for independence, flexibility, and as a stepping-stone for opening their own restaurants:** across the city, vendors most frequently cite a desire for independence as important for entering the cart industry (68%). After independence, a desire to have one's own restaurant, wanting to be a cook, and a desire for flexibility were all frequently cited goals (46%, 23% and 20% overall, respectively).
- **The majority of cart owners value getting by independently over profits:** 47% of vendors answered "able to get by independently" when asked how they would measure if their business is successful, whereas only 26% answered "profits." Forty-seven percent also answered "many customers." Other measures of success included using local produce for a majority of food, being happy on a deep and interpersonal level, and making people happy.
- **Food cart vendors often value their relationships with customers and ability to interact more directly than if they were in a storefront:** according to the interviews, vendors reported enjoying interacting with customers and communities in a way they may not be able to as cooks in a restaurant.
- **Food carts are often a family business:** several interviewees felt that family nature of the business was a benefit to them.



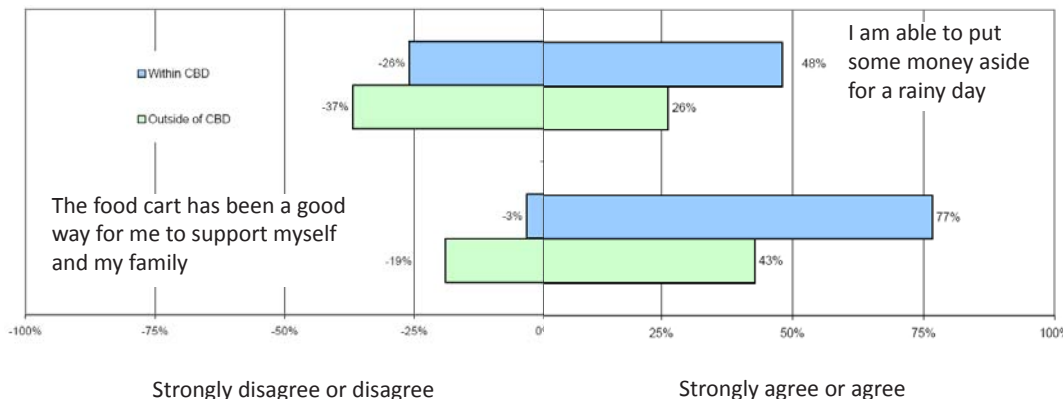


# Findings

## Community Economic Development

6. Despite the beneficial opportunities that food carts can provide, there are numerous challenges to owning a food cart.

*Some of the most frequently-cited challenges include: finding a stable business location, saving money, and realizing long-term business goals.*



### Ability to Save Money

- Few cart owners are able to save money for a rainy day: Only 40% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I am able to put some money aside for a rainy day*, whereas 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement

### Locational Differences in Profitability

- Food carts within the CBD are more profitable than those outside of the CBD:** vendors operating within the CBD were more likely than those operating outside to agree or strongly agree that the food cart has been a good way for them to support themselves and their families (77% compared to 43%). Of the vendors operating within the CBD, 48% reported being able to save money, whereas of those outside the CBD, only 26% agreed or strongly agreed.
- Finding a site is a challenge:** 52 % of cart owners responded that finding a site for their cart was a challenge to begin their businesses.



Photo: foodcartsporeland.com

## Community Economic Development

7. While many food cart owners want to open storefront businesses, there is a financial leap from a food cart operation to opening a storefront.

*Additionally, since the size and scale of food cart operations are limited by the physical structure, it is difficult to find a storefront of the appropriate size at the necessary time to incrementally grow a cart-based business. Current codes encourage retail spaces designed to attract specific types of businesses, particularly by conforming to size requirements for chain retail establishments.*

### Desire to Move into a Storefront

- **Food carts vendors sometimes consider the cart to be a stepping-stone to a storefront business:** over half (51%) of food cart vendors surveyed plan to move into a storefront in the future; there is not a large difference between vendors operating within the CBD (47%) and those outside of it (55%).
- **Vendors who want to open a storefront often do not plan to sell their cart:** several of the vendors interviewed plan to keep their carts if they move to a storefront, either as an additional location or to enhance their storefront location.
- **Some vendors are not interested in expanding, often because of perceived difficulties these including financial difficulties and finding a location.:** several vendors said they were not interested in moving into a storefront. One cart owner was concerned about losing the intimate customer interaction she currently has at her cart.

### Difficulty of Moving into a Storefront

- **The largest perceived barrier to expansion or relocation was financial:** 50% of people thought they might be prevented from expanding or relocating because of lack of money, whereas only 17% thought city regulations would be a barrier. Several people also wrote-in concerns about finding the right employees for a larger space.
- **There are only a few examples of businesses that began as carts moving into storefronts successfully:** while several owners reported planning to move to a storefront, only a few cart owners are currently in the process of moving, and fewer have moved successfully.
- **Because the total costs for operating a food cart (or push cart) are substantially less than those of a storefront restaurant, it is quite difficult to make the transition into a storefront:** while the significant difference in costs for a food cart and a storefront is a benefit for market-entry, it is a barrier to growing the business (see Table 3 in page35). Even the most successful food carts, who have the means and business capabilities of making the transition, are limited to specific conditions that will allow for continued success in a storefront, such as finances, timing, and space.

*"I like being outside. I see a million faces everyday. Working a kitchen, it is too crowded and sucks your soul." – Food Cart Owner*

*"I feel good about what I am doing and making people happy." – Food Cart Owner*

# Findings

## Community Economic Development

8. Food cart owners do not frequently access small business development resources available to them, such as bank loans and other forms of assistance.

*The majority of food cart owners do not have business loans through banks or other lending groups, but they do have access to funds through personal means that allow them to start their businesses without institutional debt. The under-utilization of these resources may contribute to difficulties associated with opening and operating a food cart.*

### Accessing Assistance

- **Few vendors receive job training, help developing a business plan, or financial assistance aside from their family and friends:** only 18% of vendors overall received any initial job training, such as what Mercy Corps NW offers.
- **Most cart owners financed their business with help from family or by using their savings:** over half of vendors (51%) report receiving assistance from family members, and almost half used personal savings (49%) to start their businesses. Only 2% received support from an organization, and 8% used a home equity loan. One vendor interviewed said he talked to his bank about getting a loan, but he thinks that the mortgage crisis is preventing people from getting loans.
- **There are no trade organizations available to food cart vendors in Portland:** vendors' opinions about whether or not they would benefit from such an organization seem varied; one owner thought that vendors compete too much to want to work together, whereas several others felt that it would be beneficial.





# Findings

**The cost of doing business comparison** indicates the differences in market-entry for push carts, stationary mobile carts, and small businesses. It clearly demonstrates the difficulty of moving from even a successful food cart into a more stable storefront. This study found only one case of a business making the transition, although several cart businesses are at various stages of realizing that goal.

*Sources: Portland Development Commission. (2007). Cost of Doing Business Estimator. (Retrieved 4/2008). Mercy Corps Northwest. (2008). Data from 2007 financial forecasts. Costs for push carts and food carts are based on average responses to Food Cartology vendor surveys and interviews.*

**Table 3: Cost of Doing Business Comparison**

		Push Cart		Stationary Mobile Cart		Small Business	
Number of Employees		1	2	1	2	1	2
Range		Low	High	Low	High		
Revenues		\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$48,999	\$97,998
Recurring Costs	Land Rent	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$7,200		
	Rent	\$100	\$100	\$0	\$0	\$11,186	\$22,372
	Storage	\$200	\$700	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Commissary Kitchen	\$500	\$4,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Workers' Compensation	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$990	\$1,980
	Total Recurring Costs	\$800	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,200	\$12,176	\$24,352
One-Time Costs	System Development Charges	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,511	\$3,021
	Cart (depreciated cost over 10 years)	\$200	\$600	\$600	\$3,000	\$0	\$0
	Total One-Time Costs	\$800	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,200	\$12,176	\$24,352
Building Permits		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,338	\$2,036
Taxes (State and Local Total)		\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$214	\$294
Total Costs		\$1,100	\$5,700	\$6,700	\$10,300	\$15,239	\$29,703

*Notes: The small business costs are based on the costs for a small storefront restaurant. The ranges show different costs that various carts may experience. For example, some low-end carts may incur higher-end expenses and vice versa. The one-time cart cost is depreciated over 10 years. Purchase costs range from \$2,000 for push carts to \$30,000 for stationary mobile carts regardless of financing.*

# Recommendations

The food cart industry will continue to operate in Portland for the immediate future. However, without some degree of planning for the future of carts, the public benefits and micro-enterprise opportunity they provide may be reduced, or even lost. The market for developable land heavily influences food carts' viability, and dictates how and where food carts can survive unless innovative strategies are employed to identify new ways to incorporate them into the urban fabric of Portland. Alternatively, over-regulating food carts can significantly reduce the community and economic benefits they provide.

UVG has developed three strategies to promote the beneficial aspects of food carts and mitigate negative impacts. Each of these strategies is comprised of several proposed actions that various city agencies could implement, which require varying levels of resource commitment. In some cases a partnership with existing community organizations is recommended, and particular organizations have been identified.

*Portland's food carts are part of what makes Portland unique!*  
-Public Survey Respondent

*The food carts are great addition to Portland's personality and the DIY attitude of the city's residents. I absolutely love them. They're right up there with the Farmers Market and Saturday Market in my book.*

-Public Survey Respondent

## Vision PDX

The Bureau of Planning is currently updating the Comprehensive Plan that will guide Portland's development over the next three decades. Promoting food carts will address all three central values of VisionPDX, a guiding document for the comprehensive plan.

**Community Connectedness and Distinctiveness:** providing funding and programmatic resources to strengthen the food cart sector will contribute to tightly-knit communities by providing avenues for social interactions, improving street vitality and safety. The colorful Mississippi carts are an indication of how diversity of cart design can add to a neighborhood's distinctiveness.

**Equity and Accessibility:** UVG found that food carts are often owned by immigrants, that the work is often satisfying and that many cart owners are able to support themselves and their families. Promoting this industry will therefore also expand economic opportunities among Portland's increasingly diverse population.

**Sustainability:** UVG's recommendations advance sustainability—**socially** through the personal interactions common at food carts; **environmentally** as they are usually accessed by non-automobile uses; **economically** by promoting local businesses and neighborhood retail areas; and **culturally** in their reflection of Portland's diversity.

# Recommendations

## Criteria

A wide variety of alternative actions to address the issues determined in the study were reviewed and evaluated against two types of criteria. First, the proposed action was evaluated on the basis of its ability to accomplish the project goals of promoting the benefits of food carts, mitigating impacts, and overcoming challenges. The second set of criteria evaluates political, financial, and administrative feasibility, answering the following questions:

### Political Viability

Is the action acceptable or could it be made acceptable to relevant stakeholders?

### Financial Feasibility

Do the benefits of the action justify the costs associated with implementing it?

### Administrative Operability

Can the current agency staff implement and manage the action?

The analysis of the most favorable alternatives is shown in Table 4. UVG believes that the following recommendations are most effective and capable of being implemented based on our evaluation.

## Strategy 1: Identify additional locations for food carts.

As the city matures and the market conditions that have facilitated food carts locating on surface parking lots begin to change, the City should identify additional locations where food carts can operate. All of the property owners interviewed indicated that they plan to develop the property when the market conditions are right, and the barriers

that exist usually preclude vendors from moving into the new retail spaces. Furthermore, the data indicate that finding a site is a barrier to opening a food cart, which will become increasingly more difficult as vacant lands are developed. It is in the City's best interest that food carts act as interim uses of vacant lands and not preclude development; however, this further diminishes the stability of cart sites. Furthermore, there are many existing public and private spaces that could benefit from the presence of food carts, especially to promote interim infill in commercial nodes outside the central business district. UVG recommends the following actions to expand options for food cart locations:

### Action 1.1

Encourage developers to designate space for food carts in appropriate projects. As vacant lands are developed, working with developers to ensure that the public benefits associated with food carts are maintained will be important. Such spaces can help increase the stability of the location for the food cart owner and allow the developer to provide distinctive character to a project that is suitable for food carts.

### Action 1.2

Work with neighborhood partners to identify privately-owned sites that could be adapted for food carts and are appropriate for such uses. Sites may include properties with existing shelter or electric hook-ups, space for seating, adequate pedestrian access, and market demand for additional small restaurant uses. Food carts should be especially considered in areas where they could make an area feel safer.



# Recommendations

## Action 1.3

Provide space for food carts in existing publicly owned locations and consider carts in projects currently under development. Food carts represent an opportunity for the City to provide avenues for local small business development in areas they may not otherwise be able to afford rent. Some examples of existing or proposed locations where food carts could be accommodated include: city parks, the downtown bus mall, MAX stops and transit centers, park and ride facilities, Ankeny Plaza, Centennial Mills, and sidewalks in popular commercial or high-pedestrian-volume districts. The Eastside light rail line is a good example of an opportunity with significant pedestrian traffic that would benefit from the presence of carts.

## Strategy 2: Increase awareness of informational resources for stakeholders in the food cart industry by connecting them with existing programs.

The results of this study indicate that food cart owners do not appear to be accessing assistance currently available through existing programs and resources. Many small business programs such as Mercy Corps NW, Hacienda, and other non-profit organizations provide financial planning and other business development services. Cart owners or potential owners could benefit from business plan assistance, help finding a cart and location, guidance maneuvering the regulatory environment, and many other aspects of beginning a business. Such assistance could help increase the profitability of food cart businesses, increase the number of owners that are able to save money, and eventually help those that wish expand or transition to a storefront. UVG recommends the following actions to increase awareness of these resources among food cart owners:

## Action 2.1

Partner with community organizations to develop an outreach strategy. Working with Mercy Corps NW, Hacienda, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, Community Development Corporations, and other community groups, identify existing and potential food cart entrepreneurs and inform them about existing programs that provide business assistance. Such assistance should include marketing, developing a business plan and financial planning, accessing grants, and navigating the permitting process. A variety of outreach tools could be used including developing a website or hosting a food cart fair, which would connect vendors, farmers, landowners, and small business support providers.

## Action 2.2

Expand the business finance and incentive programs at PDC to include targeted support for food carts. Currently, programs provide many types of resources to traditional small business, which could also benefit food carts. PDC should expand their loan and assistance programs to specifically target food cart owners. This assistance could include helping food carts' start-up challenges and assisting them as they transition into storefronts. Assistance could include providing space for storage of additional goods needed for the move to a larger location and a savings program to aid financing the transition.

The trust of a city is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts. It grows by people stopping by at the bar for a beer, getting advice from the grocer and giving advice to the newsstand man, comparing opinions with other customers at the bakery...

-Jane Jacobs (1961)

# Recommendations

Hacienda hosts a micro-enterprise program called Micromercantes. The project which started only last year has already created a buzz in local farmer markets. At fourteen weekly farmers markets, Micromercantes sells the best tamales in town. Seventeen women, mostly Latina single mothers, increased their household income by 25-30% by participating in the program. This year they will open a food cart downtown. The cart will be run by a cooperative of 14 women. Through the program they offer access to MercyCorp's 3-to-1 individual development account (IDA) match program, and business skills training. The staff at Hacienda are providing a key role by navigating many of the hurdles associated with opening a cart including finding a location, purchasing a cart, and getting licensed. Finding a commercial kitchen is also another commonly hurdle to opening a food cart and Hacienda is building a commercial kitchen at one of their affordable housing sites.

## Strategy 3: Promote innovative urban design elements that support food carts.

Innovative urban design can promote the benefits of food carts while mitigating their negative impacts by implementing the following actions:

### Action 3.1

Support publicly- or privately- provided food cart site improvements that increase public amenities. Such amenities could include seating, shelter, landscaping, and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks. The proposed awning and railing on the bus mall at SW 5th and Oak are examples of such improvements.

### Action 3.2

Work with stakeholders to ensure an adequate supply of trash cans. Work with Multnomah County Health Department, private property owners, and/or food cart owners to ensure that sites have adequate trash cans at food carts.

### Action 3.3

Sponsor a design competition to incorporate food carts uses on sites. A cost-efficient way of increasing awareness and promoting creative design, such a competition could develop ways of incorporating food carts or smaller retail niches that may be appropriate for cart owners who want to expand.

### Action 3.4

Continue to support diversity in design regulations. Currently, the design of carts on private property is not regulated. Push carts on the public right-of-way that undergo design review have minimal design requirements. UVG's study found that the cart design did not influence either the public's perception of food carts or the level of social interaction. Therefore, the City should continue to allow the food carts to reflect design diversity.

# Recommendations

## Portland Transit Mall Revitalization Project

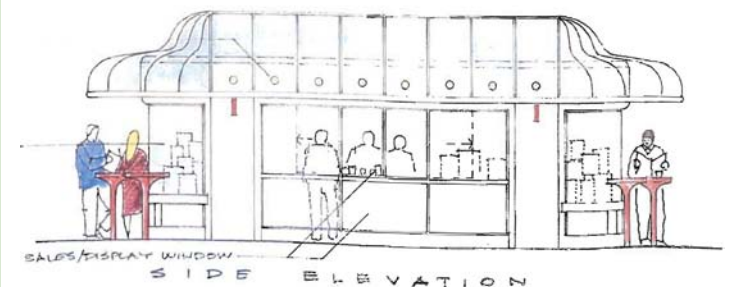
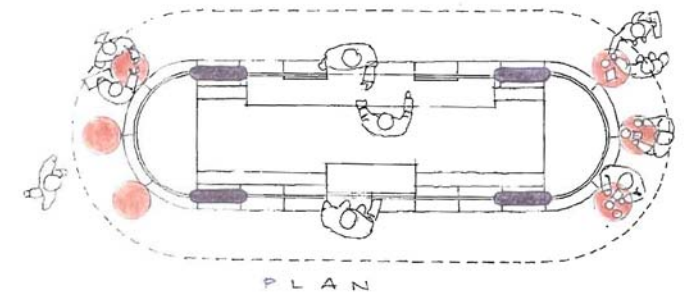
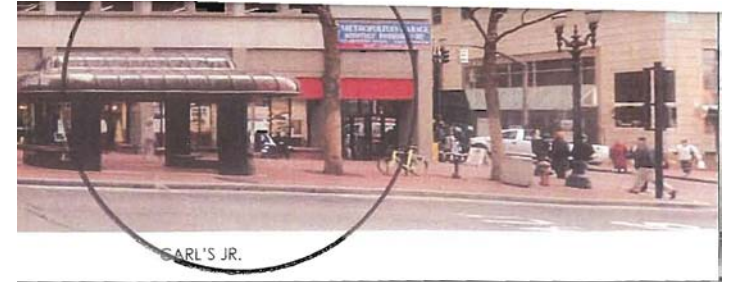
Over the past two years, Trimet's Block By Block (BBB) project has identified opportunities to make the mall safer, livelier and more economically vital. Food carts are a key ingredient in the mall's revitalization and one that will contribute to the activation and animation of downtown, according to a BBB report on street vending.<sup>28</sup>

Based on research on food cart practices in Portland and other U.S. cities, BBB made four key recommendations for a new food cart program.<sup>29</sup>

1. The food cart program should be managed and regulated by the non-profit Portland Mall Management Inc.(PMMI). Existing sidewalk push carts should continue to be regulated by the Portland Office of Transportation.
2. Food Carts should be established at seven prime locations that were identified by BBB.
3. Cart operators should be recruited from well-know restaurants and cafés, such as Papa Haydn's, Jake's and Moonstruck Chocolate's.
4. PMMI should lease "off the shelf" carts to vendors and modification should be limited to adding PMMI's logo as well as the cart company's name.

UVG applauds the food cart program as outlined above and recognizes it as a significant step in making the transit mall a vibrant social space. We do, however, recommend adapting the program in light of our findings in order to make the most of the \$200 million public investment in the Transit Mall Revitalization Project. We recommend the following two program adaptations:

1. The food cart program should consider economic equity as a central objective and recruit cart operators, not from high end restaurants, but from low income and minority communities.
2. Creativity in cart aesthetics should be encouraged, rather than limited, in order to allow vendors to creatively participate in the design of the urban fabric. UVG's results show that the aesthetics of a cart's exterior has little impact on the social benefits of the enterprise but may add to a neighborhood's distinctiveness.



A proposed transformation of a 1980s bus shelter into a street vending space in the Transit Mall

Source: Block By Block

# Recommendations

## Innovative Design for Density and Carts

The mixed-use affordable housing development Hismen Hin-nu Terrace in Oakland, California, demonstrated how vending carts can complement high density development by incorporating vendor niches in its façade at street level. The architect Michael Pyatok included street vending in the design to create livelier, safer sidewalks and to provide entrepreneurial opportunities for the low income immigrant residents of the neighborhood. The sidewalk niches are recessed five feet from the sidewalk and roll-down curtains allow vendors to store their wares safely overnight. Unfortunately, the design was not flawless; views into the indoor retail space located behind these niches were blocked by the street vendors. With slight design modifications, the retail element of the award winning Hismen Hin-Nu Terrace could have been even more successful.<sup>27</sup> This project is a good example of ways that cities can foster spaces for food carts even after vacant lands and surface parking have been developed.



Vendor niches at Hismen Hin-Nu Terrace, Oakland, CA  
Source: [www.wall-pa.uic.edu](http://www.wall-pa.uic.edu)

## Next Steps

This preliminary analysis of the food cart industry indicates additional research opportunities into ways that the City of Portland can assist or manage the food cart industry to achieve city-wide goals.

**Food Access.** Food carts may increase access to food in low-income neighborhoods, which may lack grocery stores or access to fresh fruits or vegetables. After identifying access to food as an equity issue for the City to address, New York made additional food cart permits available to carts that sell fresh produce in low-income neighborhoods. Portland could explore similar ways to increase food access by providing incentives for food carts to locate in target neighborhoods.

**Rethinking Zoning.** since the placement of mobile food carts on private land is unregulated by the zoning code, there is limited oversight or public involvement for the placement of such a site. The City may want to explore the possible ways to permit food cart sites, especially where several are located on one parcel. However, the City should be aware that increased regulation might be a distinct concern and potential barrier to carts



# Recommendations

Table 4: Recommendation alternatives evaluation

		ACTIONS	CRITERIA					
			Benefits Promotion	Impact Mitigation	Overcomes Challenges	Politically Viable	Financially Feasible	Administrative Operability
STRATEGIES	Identify Additional Locations for Food Carts	Encourage developers to designate space for food cart operations in appropriate projects	X		X	X	X	X
		Work with neighborhood partners to identify privately owned sites that could be adapted for interim uses like food carts	X		X	X	X	
		Provide space for food carts in new or existing publicly owned locations	X	X	X	X		X
		Purchase and develop a property explicitly for food carts and other micro-enterprise businesses	X	X	X			
		Develop a referral system to connect property owners with space and food cart owners looking for a site	X		X			
	Increase awareness of informational resources for stakeholders	Partner with community organizations to develop an outreach strategy	X		X	X	X	X
		Expand the business finance and storefront improvement programs at PDC to include support for food carts and other micro-enterprises	X		X	X		X
	Promote Innovative Urban Design	Support publicly or privately provided food cart friendly site improvements that increase public amenities	X		X	X		X
		Sponsor a design competition to incorporate food carts on site	X		X	X	X	X
		Work with stakeholders to ensure an adequate supply of trash cans at food cart sites		X		X	X	X
		Continue to support diversity in design regulations	X			X	X	X

---

## Notes:

1. Portland Food Carts: [foodcartsportland.com](http://foodcartsportland.com), Food Cart Map: [www.speakeasy.org/~aeschrigh/maps](http://www.speakeasy.org/~aeschrigh/maps), Sellwood Corner Food Carts: [myfoodcart.com](http://myfoodcart.com), all accessed 5/26/2008
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17. Ibid, p.11.
18. Press Release from the City of New York. December 18, 2007. "Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Quinn announce Green Cart Legislation to Improve Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Neighborhoods with Greatest Need."
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20. Johnson, Gary. April 20th, 2007. Personal Interview. City of Seattle, Bureau of Planning.
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27. Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, Silver Medal 1997.
28. January 24, 2007, p. 1 "Summary of Vendor Cart Investigations"
29. April 2, 2007. Portland Transit Mall Re-vitalization Project. "Final Vendor Cart Recommendations"

## Appendix A-Regulatory Session Attendees

**Richard Eisenhauer**, Portland Office of Transportation, City of Portland

**Kenneth Yee**, Multnomah County Health Department, City of Portland

**Randall Howarth**, Multnomah County Health Department, City of Portland

**Sterling Bennet**, Bureau of Development Services, City of Portland

**Kenneth Carlson**, Bureau of Development Services, City of Portland

**Suzanne Vara**, Bureau of Development Services, City of Portland

**Judy Battles**, Bureau of Development Services, City of Portland

**Kate Marcello**, Bureau of Development Services, City of Portland

**Mike Ebeling**, Bureau of Development Services, City of Portland

# Appendix B-Survey and Inventory Instrument

## Site Inventory

Location:			Date/Time:			Name:					
Site											
Total Number of Carts On Site	Odor (1-3)	Smell Pleasant? (Y/N)	Noise (1-3)	Litter on Site (1-3)	# On Street Parking Available directly in front	# Of Off Street Parking on Site	Paved (Y/N)	Shaded Area Provided on site to sit(Y/N)	Side walk width(feet)	Block Side	Speed
PUBLICLY Provided Furnishings											
# of trash cans	#ofbenches	# of street trees		Other site improvements							
				Pedestriancrossingsafetyfeatures							

### DEFINITIONS

Total Number of Carts On Site	Record the total number of Carts on the Site and others immediately adjacent	# Of Off Street Parking Available on Site	ApproximatethenumberofvehiclesthatcouldparkonsiteforFREE
Odor (1-3)	Rank the Odor of the entire site 1-No noticeable food smells	Paved (Y/N)	Is the site paved?
	2-Mild food smells on site	Shaded Area Provided on Site (Y/N)	Is there a shaded area provided to sit under?
	3-Strong food smells across street or 50 feet away	What is the side walk width?	In feet in front of carts
Smell Pleasant?	If odor is ranked 2 or 3. Are the food smells pleasant?	Block Side	What side of the block are the carts on? (N,S,E,W)
Noise (1-3)	Rank the noise level of the entire site 1-No noticeable noise coming from site	Speed	What is the posted speed limit on the street in front of the site?
	2-Somenoisecomingfromsitethatadjacentneighborscan hear	Publicly provided furnishings	Recordnumberofpubliclyprovidedtrashcans,benchesandstreet trees on the block that the carts are located all four sides of block
	3-You hear noise from the site from 50 feet away	Other site improvements	Listanyotherimprovementstothesiteincludinglaying down bark, flowers, benches, art....
Litter on Site (1-3)	Rank the amount of litter on the site (the entire block) 1- No noticeable litter 2- Less then 20 pieces of litter 3- More then 20 pieces of litter	Aretherepedestriancrossingsafetyfeaturesto the site--curb bulbs, crosswalks?	Describepedestriansafetyaccessfeaturesthatprovideaccess to the site (curb bulbs, crosswalks)
On Street Parking Available directly in front	NumberofSpaceavailableonthestreetdirectlyinfrontof blockthatcartsarelocated(allsidesoftheblockbothsides of the street)	OtherNotes:Plasenoteanyotherrelevantstreetdesign/publicamenitiesorpointsofinterestsurrounding the site:	



# Appendix B-Survey and Inventory Instrument

## Cart Inventory

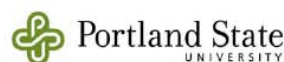
Location:				Date/ Time:			Name:			
Carts										
	Awning (Y/N)	Porch (Y/N)	Gar- bage Can (Y/ N)	Side- walk Sign (Y/N)	Cart specific seating#	Exterior Aesthet- ics of Cart (1-3)	Water/ Gas Tank Visibility (Y/N)	Name of Owner	Survey Dropped Off (Y/N)	Survey Picked Up (Y/ N)

Definitions			
Name of Cart	Record Name Of Cart	Exterior Aesthetics of Cart (1-3)	Rank the aesthetics of the cart
Awning (Y/N)	Is there an awning that is attached to the cart?		1-Cart is not maintained, visibly in disrepair, AND no art or decoration
Porch (Y/N)	Is there a deck or porch?		2-Cart is maintained but no art or decoration
Garbage Can (Y/N)	Does the cart have a garbage can?		3-Cart is maintained and attractive with decorations and art
Sidewalk Sign (Y/N)	Does the cart have a sidewalk sign?	Gas/Water Tank	Are the gas/water tanks clearly visible from the street? (Y/N)
Cart specific seating	Number of seats		
** NOTES			

# Appendix B-Survey and Inventory Instrument

## Public Intercept Survey



Portland State University  
Master of Urban and Regional Planning  
Food Cartology Student Group Project

### Food Cart Survey (Public Intercept)

#### 1. Do you purchase food from food carts?

<input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>1a. Why not? (Please check all that apply)</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Concern about food safety <input type="checkbox"/> Unappealing condition of cart <input type="checkbox"/> Don't like the food options <input type="checkbox"/> Nowhere to sit <input type="checkbox"/> Don't like the owner/worker <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting time is long <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____ <b>GO TO QUESTION #2</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<b>1b. How often do you patronize food carts?</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more times a week <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 times a week <input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 4 times a week <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week
	<b>1c. Why do you patronize food carts? (Please check all that apply)</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable food <input type="checkbox"/> Close to work/school <input type="checkbox"/> Tasty food <input type="checkbox"/> Close to home <input type="checkbox"/> Personal relation with cart operator <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor seating/table <input type="checkbox"/> Good place for people watching <input type="checkbox"/> No other food option nearby <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____
	<b>1d. How do you usually travel to the food carts?</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Bike <input type="checkbox"/> Transit <input type="checkbox"/> Drive <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements</b>
	<b>1e. I have good relationship with one or more food cart operators</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
	<b>1f. I have met new people while patronizing food carts</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
	<b>1g. I have become better acquainted with people while patronizing food carts</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
	<b>1h. I have conversations with cart operator(s) other than ordering food</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
	<b>1i. I have conversations with other customers at the food carts</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<b>2. The presence of food carts in this neighborhood makes the streets feel safer.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
<b>3. I want to see more food carts in this neighborhood</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
<b>4. Food carts in this neighborhood are a better use of the site than a parking lot</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree

A few more questions on the back

#### 5. How do you feel about the following physical qualities of the food cart(s) in this neighborhood?

	Appealing	Unappealing	No opinion
5a. Signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5b. Awnings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5c. Exterior of trailer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5d. View into kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5e. Tables and chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 6. Is there noticeable smell from the food cart(s)?

☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ Don't know

#### 6a. How do you feel about the smell?

☐ Pleasant    ☐ Neutral    ☐ Unpleasant    ☐ N/A

#### 7. Is there noticeable noise from the food cart(s)?

☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ Don't know

#### 7a. How do you feel about the noise?

☐ Pleasant    ☐ Neutral    ☐ Unpleasant    ☐ N/A

#### 8. Is there noticeable litter from the food cart(s)?

☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ Don't know

#### 9. How do you think the food cart(s) can be improved? (Please check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Better design of cart exterior/signage	<input type="checkbox"/> Operate more evening hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate handling of trash	<input type="checkbox"/> Operate fewer hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate waste water disposal	<input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian clearance on sidewalk
<input type="checkbox"/> Safer food handling	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide bathroom
<input type="checkbox"/> Use recyclable food containers	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide seating/table
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce odor	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide shelter from weather
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing to improve
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____	

#### 10. Of the above issues, which one are you mostly concerned with?

#### 11. What is your overall perception of food cart(s) in this neighborhood?

☐ Very Positive    ☐ Positive    ☐ Neutral    ☐ Negative    ☐ Very Negative

#### 12. What is your yearly household income?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$15,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$45,000-\$54,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000-\$24,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$55,000-\$64,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000-\$34,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$65,000-\$74,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$35,000-\$44,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000 or more

#### 13. Other comments or suggestions for our study?

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Thank you for your time!

# Appendix B-Survey and Inventory Instrument

## Vendor Survey



Portland State University  
Master of Urban and Regional Planning  
Food Cartology Student Project  
Site No. \_\_\_\_\_ Survey No

The Urban Vitality Group is made up of six students from Portland State University's Urban and Regional Planning program. We are studying the social and economic impacts of food carts in the city and would like your input based on your experience as a food cart owner. Your answers will be kept anonymous. Thank you for taking the 5-10 minutes to finish our survey!

Name of Business \_\_\_\_\_ Type of food \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Address/Location \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why did you get into the food cart business, rather than another industry? (Check all that apply)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Flexibility of schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> c Hard to find other employment | <input type="checkbox"/> e Want to be a cook              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b Independence            | <input type="checkbox"/> d Knew other cart owners        | <input type="checkbox"/> f Want to have my own restaurant |

g. Other reasons (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. What year did you begin operating this cart? \_\_\_\_\_

Was your cart previously owned by a different owner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. How satisfied are you with your current location?

- |   |   |                                    |   |   |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> a Somewhat Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> b Neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> c Somewhat Unsatisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> d Very Unsatisfied |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|

What do you particularly like or dislike about your location? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are your hours? (Check all that apply)

- | Weekdays                             |                                       | Weekends                             |                                       | Winter                               |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Breakfast | <input type="checkbox"/> c Dinner     | <input type="checkbox"/> e Breakfast | <input type="checkbox"/> g Dinner     | <input type="checkbox"/> i Breakfast | <input type="checkbox"/> k Dinner     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b Lunch     | <input type="checkbox"/> d Late-night | <input type="checkbox"/> f Lunch     | <input type="checkbox"/> h Late-night | <input type="checkbox"/> j Lunch     | <input type="checkbox"/> l Late-night |

5. How many employees do you have, not including yourself? \_\_\_\_ How many are family members? \_\_\_\_

6. What changes would you make to attract more customers? (Check all that apply)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Clean-up site around my cart        | <input type="checkbox"/> d Provide seating/table | <input type="checkbox"/> g Advertise food    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b Provide recycleable food containers | <input type="checkbox"/> e Improve signage       | <input type="checkbox"/> h Improve marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c Improve access for pedestrians      | <input type="checkbox"/> f Install awning        | <input type="checkbox"/> i Create a website  |

Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply
a. I have a friendly relationship with my customers.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
b. I have a friendly relationship with nearby food cart owners.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
c. I have a friendly relationship with nearby store-front business owners	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
d. I have a friendly relationship with my landlord	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

8. Did you face any of these difficulties when you were opening your business?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Obtaining financial support | <input type="checkbox"/> c Finding a trailer | <input type="checkbox"/> e Getting licences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b Developing a business plan  | <input type="checkbox"/> d Job training      | <input type="checkbox"/> f Finding a site   |

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

What was difficult about it? \_\_\_\_\_

1

9. Did you receive any of the following types of assistance when starting your business?

- | a. Financial:   | b. Business Experience:                               | c. Materials and Licenses:                   |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Assistance from family members | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Job training               | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Licenses          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Support from an organization   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Developing a business plan | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Finding a trailer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Home equity loan               |   | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Finding a site    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 I used personal savings        |   |  |

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you currently have a business plan?

- ☐1 Yes ☐2 No ☐3 Don't know

11. Do you currently have a loan out on your business?

- ☐1 Yes ☐2 No ☐3 Don't know

12. What are your plans for the future of your business?

- | Expand:   | Relocate:                                      |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Larger trailer       | <input type="checkbox"/> d Within neighborhood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b Additional cart      | <input type="checkbox"/> e New neighborhood    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c Move into storefront |  |

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

13. If you plan to expand or relocate, what do you think might prevent you?

- |  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Lack of money                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b City regulations                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c Do not plan to expand or relocate |

14. About how much do you spend each month on the following business expenses:

- |   |                     |                    |                      |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| a. Rent? _____  | b. Utilities? _____ | c. Staffing? _____ | d. Food costs? _____ |
| e. Do you have a lease? <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Yes; yearly <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Yes; month-to-month <input type="checkbox"/> 3 No <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Don't know |                     |                    |                      |

15. Where do you buy your food?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Super market/ warehouse grocery (Costco) | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 On-site            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Local farmer                             | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Commissary kitchen |

16. Where do you prepare your food?

17. About how much money do you make each day? (gross total) \_\_\_\_\_ each month? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you agree with the following statements?

- |   | Strongly Agree             | Somewhat Agree             | Neutral                    | Somewhat Disagree          | Strongly Disagree          | Does not apply             |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. The food cart has been a good way for me to support myself and my family | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| b. I am able to put some money aside for a rainy day.                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

19. Do you own your home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Do you have another job in addition to the cart? ☐ Yes; year-round ☐ Yes; seasonal ☐ No

21. How would you measure if your business is successful?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Many customers        | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Make a significant profit | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Able to get by independently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Move into store front | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Other: _____              |   |

### Demographic information

22. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐1 Hispanic ☐2 Caucasian ☐3 Asian ☐4 Eastern European ☐5 African American ☐6 Other \_\_\_\_\_

23. Were you born in the United States? ☐1 Yes ☐2 No a. How long have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_ years

24. Where do you live?

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Southeast Portland | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Southwest Portland | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 North Portland           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Northeast Portland | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Northwest Portland | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Outside city of Portland |

25. Do you have any comments or suggestions for our study?

Thank you for your time!

Would you like to talk with us further about our study? \_\_\_\_\_ 2

# Appendix B-Survey and Inventory Instrument

## Neighborhood Business Survey

NOTE: Please ask the business owner or manager to complete this survey.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Business _____
Business Address _____
Type of Business (restaurant, dry cleaner, etc.) _____
How long has your business been in this location? _____
How many employees work in your business? _____

**1. How often do you patronize the food cart(s) in this neighborhood?**

- 1 ☐ 5 or more times a week  
2 ☐ 3 to 4 times a week  
3 ☐ 1 to 2 times a week  
4 ☐ Less than once a week  
5 ☐ Never

Regarding the food carts in this neighborhood, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

**2. The presence of food carts has increased foot traffic on the streets.**

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Agree 3 ☐ Neutral 4 ☐ Disagree 5 ☐ Strongly disagree

**3. My sales have increased because of the presence of food carts.**

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Agree 3 ☐ Neutral 4 ☐ Disagree 5 ☐ Strongly disagree

**4. The presence of food carts makes the streets feel safer.**

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Agree 3 ☐ Neutral 4 ☐ Disagree 5 ☐ Strongly disagree

**5. I have a friendly relationship with the food cart operators.**

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Agree 3 ☐ Neutral 4 ☐ Disagree 5 ☐ Strongly disagree

**6. I have a friendly relationship with other store-front business owners.**

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Agree 3 ☐ Neutral 4 ☐ Disagree 5 ☐ Strongly disagree

**7. I want to see more food carts in this neighborhood.**

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Agree 3 ☐ Neutral 4 ☐ Disagree 5 ☐ Strongly disagree

**8. Food carts are a better use of the site than a parking lot.**

- 1 ☐ Strongly agree 2 ☐ Agree 3 ☐ Neutral 4 ☐ Disagree 5 ☐ Strongly disagree

**9. Is there noticeable smell from the food cart(s)?**

- 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No 3 ☐ Don't know

**10. Is there noticeable noise from the food cart(s)?**

- 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No 3 ☐ Don't know

**11. Is there noticeable litter from the food cart(s)?**

- 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No 3 ☐ Don't know

**9a. How do you feel about the smell?**

- 1 ☐ Pleasant 2 ☐ Neutral 3 ☐ Unpleasant 4 ☐ N/A

**10a. How do you feel about the noise?**

- 1 ☐ Pleasant 2 ☐ Neutral 3 ☐ Unpleasant 4 ☐ N/A

**12. How do you think the food cart(s) can be improved? (Please check all that apply.)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a <input type="checkbox"/> Better design of cart exterior/signage | h <input type="checkbox"/> Operate more evening hours       |
| b <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate handling of trash          | i <input type="checkbox"/> Operate fewer hours              |
| c <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate waste water disposal       | j <input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian clearance on sidewalk |
| d <input type="checkbox"/> Safer food handling                    | k <input type="checkbox"/> Provide bathroom                 |
| e <input type="checkbox"/> Use recyclable food container          | l <input type="checkbox"/> Provide seating/table            |
| f <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce odor                            | m <input type="checkbox"/> Provide shelter from weather     |
| g <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce noise                           | n <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing to improve               |
| o <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____          |   |

**13. Of the above issues, which one are you mostly concerned about?**

**14. Please rank your overall perception of food cart(s) in this neighborhood.**

- 1 ☐ Very positive  
2 ☐ Positive  
3 ☐ Neutral  
4 ☐ Negative  
5 ☐ Very negative

**15. Other comments or suggestions for our study?**

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Thank you for your time!



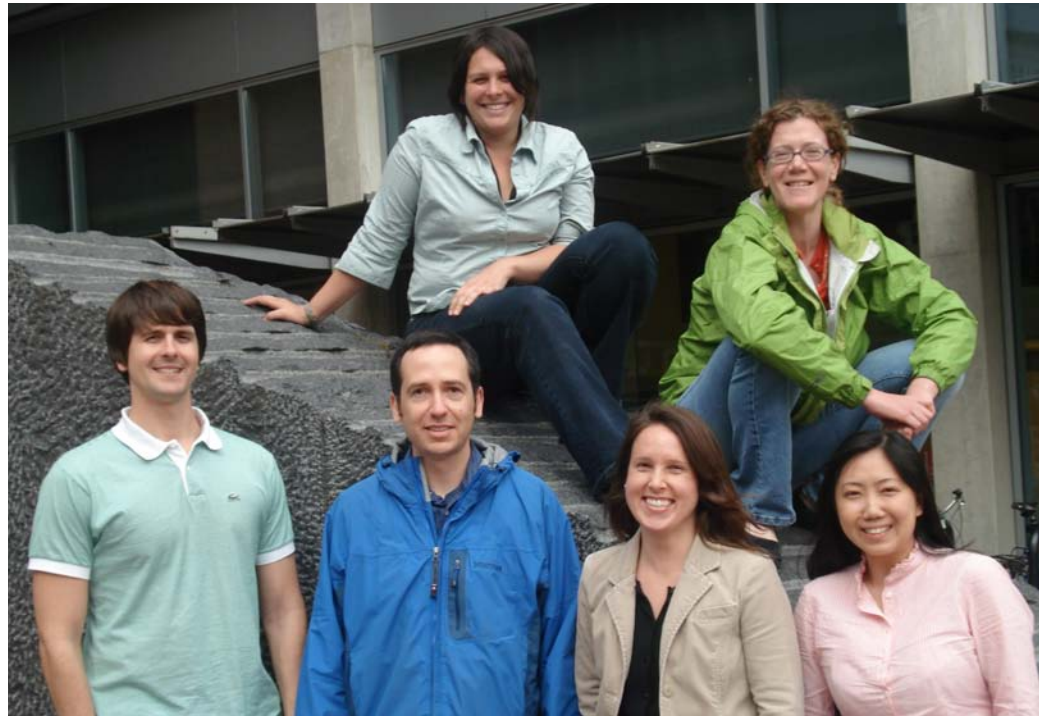
# Appendix C-Interviewee List

Stakeholder Group	Organization	Representative Name
Private Property Owner (Downtown)	City Center Parking	Mark Goodman
Private Property Owner (Sellwood)	Sellwood Antique Mall	Mark Gearhart
Private Property Owner (Mississippi)	Mississippi Rising LLC	Rachel Elizabeth
Private Property Owner (Cully)	Cully Owner	Gerald Kieffer
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Pioneer Square)	Shelly's Garden: Honkin' Huge Burritos	Shelly Sandoval
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Downtown)	Loco Locos Burritos	Ana Maria
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Downtown)	Tabor	Monika Vitek
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Downtown)	Rip City Grill	Clint Melville
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Sellwood)	Garden State Foods	Kevin Sandri
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Sellwood)	Wild Things	Rick
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Miss)	Tita's Pista	Judith Stokes
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Miss)	Moxie Rx	Nancye Benson
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Cully)	Taqueria Uruapan	Unknown
Food Trailer/Cart Owner (Cully)	Taquería Mendoza	Unknown
Neighboring Business Owner (Downtown)	Avalon Vintage	Paul Bassett
Neighboring Business Owner (Downtown)	The City Sports Bar	Tim Pearce
Neighboring Business Owner (Sellwood)	Elinas	Gary Craghead
Neighboring Business Owner (Miss)	Lovely Hula Hands	Sarah Minnick
Neighboring Business Owner (Cully)	Taqueria Ortiz	Gilberto Ortiz
Neighboring Business Owner (Other)	Tiny's Coffee	Tom Pena, Nicole Pena, Rachael Creagar
Restaurant Owner	Tio's Tacos	Pedro Rodriguez
Regulatory	PDC	Kevin Brake
Regulatory	BDS	Joe Botkin
Regulatory	BDS	Lori Graham
Regulatory/Financial	PDC (former Albina Comm. Bank)	Stephen Green
Regulatory	State of Oregon, Building Codes	Ernie Hopkins
Regulatory/Public Health	Multnomah County Health Department	Ken Yee
Micro enterprise	Mercy Corps	Sarah Chenven
Micro enterprise	Hacienda	Suzanne Paymar
Urban Design	Bureau of Planning	Mark Raggett
Urban Design	Private Consultant	Tad Savinar
Business Development	Alliance of Portland Business Associations	Jean Baker
Portland Street Vending History	Gatto & Sons	Auggie Gatto

## Appendix D-Team Profile

### HANNAH KAPELL

A native of Plymouth, Massachusetts, Hannah moved to Portland to study anthropology at Reed College. She joined the MURP program in Fall 2006 to focus on bicycling and sustainable transportation planning. Hannah is currently interning at Alta Planning + Design, where she is conducting a statistical analysis of the Safer Routes to School three-year program. She is also a graduate research assistant in the Intelligent Transportation System Lab, working on a project to determine the freight industry's effects of congestion in Oregon.



### AMY KOSKI

Amy is interested in the role of small businesses in creating vibrant local economies. Recently, she worked as an intern at the City of Portland, Bureau of Planning conducting work on the Commercial Corridor Study. She is a graduate research assistant for the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies, where she compiled data for the Oregon Innovation Council to inform a statewide economic study and contributed to the Metropolitan Briefing Book 2007. Currently, she is working on a regional food systems assessment. This past fall, Amy studied in Argentina for five months where she had the opportunity to work with the indigenous population and worker-owned cooperatives.

### PETER KATON

A native Portlander, Peter is a graduate of Lewis & Clark College with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. After working for several years in community mental health and employment services, Peter joined the MURP program in Fall 2006. Currently an intern with the non-profit Growing Gardens, he assists with program development, resource acquisition and community outreach. With a keen interest in social justice, Peter is a founding member and secretary of the student group Planning Includes Equity. Outside of his studies, Peter enjoys gardening with native plants and is active in a local effort to bring innovative means of exchange to Portland that supports the triple bottom line.

# Appendix D-Team Profile

## JINGPING LI

A native of China, Jingping used to work as program officer in China's Ministry of Land and Resources, focusing on land use and natural resource management issues. She joined the MURP program in Spring 2006 with an interest in environmental planning and sustainability. As a Graduate Research Assistant, Jingping is actively involved in the China-U.S. Sustainable Land Use and Urban Planning Program housed in the College of Urban and Public Affairs that also partners with the International Sustainable Development Foundation.

## KAREN THALHAMMER

Karen worked as a policy campaign coordinator in San Diego where she worked to pass a living wage ordinance for the City of San Diego. While there, she also organized a labor, housing, and environmental coalition to negotiate on planning policy and development projects. At the Community Alliance of Tenants she served as the Housing Policy Director and worked on a successful campaign to require that 30% of TIF be spent on affordable housing. This work lead her to PSU to work towards the MURP degree and Certificate in Real Estate Development. Most recently Karen worked at the Portland Development Commission. Currently she is the National Association of Realtors Fellow and authors articles on the housing, office, and retail market for the PSU Center of Real Estate Quarterly Report.

## COLIN PRICE

Prior to joining the MURP program in Spring 2006, Colin worked as a consultant on environmental planning and site assessment projects in Arizona, San Francisco, and Portland. Currently, he works as a planner for Portland State University's Housing and Transportation Services where he is responsible for conducting and analyzing campus transportation surveys, managing PSU's transportation and housing-related Business Energy Tax Credit applications, and is involved with sustainable transportation research. Colin has also worked as a research assistant at the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies developing the Measure 37 claims database and regional food system assessment projects. His interests include creating resilient, equitable communities, examining the intersection of rural and urban interests, and understanding the role of public health in planning.

### 3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

#### FOOD CARTOLOGY 2021: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

##### ABOUT OUR APPROACH

Our community engagement approach is multifaceted and aims to get as many perspectives on food carts as possible to make informed recommendations. We plan to hold the experiences of food cart owners, especially BIPOC food cart owners, front and center in our engagement as they are most directly impacted by policy changes, land ownership changes, and economic uncertainty. These focus groups and in-depth interviews with food cart owners will be integral in understanding the specific challenges to cart owners in 2021, and how they build upon challenges in 2018 to the Alder Street Pod. It will also be important that we get the perspective of a variety of City employees who have more insight into why certain policies are in place, and how they have changed over time. Lastly, organizations that are well integrated into their community and have relationships with businesses, have the potential to advocate for the presence of food carts and serve as a liaison between businesses and the City.

##### TIMELINE OVERVIEW

###### *March 9th-12th:*

Reach out to schedule organization interviews

###### *March 15th-26th:*

Conduct organization interviews

###### *March 12th-15th:*

Keith to send intro email from us to food cart owners with survey about willingness to participate in focus groups (they could also email Keith back and let him know)

###### *March 29th-April 9th:*

Conduct focus groups

###### *April 9th-10th:*

Invite 3-4 food cart owners to do 1:1 interviews, contact City Bureaus

###### *April 12th-16th:*

Conduct 1:1 interviews

###### *April 19th-23rd:*

Conduct City Bureau interviews

###### *April 26th-30th:*

Initial analysis

#### FOCUS GROUPS

##### PURPOSE:

To get a wide variety of perspectives on the challenges and opportunities around owning and operating a food cart. We plan to do 3 focus groups with 4-10 people in each. This will include cart owners displaced from Alder street, along with other cart owners in the Central City that have continued to operate during the pandemic.

To gain a deeper understanding into the specific experience of displacement from the Alder Street pod and where owners stand now

To find patterns and shared experiences amongst food cart owners

Hone in on 2-4 food cart owners who represent diverse backgrounds and are willing to share their stories for upcoming 1:1 interviews

##### POTENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What led you to start a food cart business? How long have you been located at your pod?
2. Do you have plans/hopes to have a brick and mortar?
3. Do you have another cart/location?
4. Are there any organizations or resources that have been helpful to you in starting, maintaining, sustaining, and/or relocating your business?
5. Are there any areas where you've wanted more support?
6. What has been most challenging about owning and operating a food cart?
7. Where do you imagine your food cart business being in 5 years? What would you need (materials, resources, support, employees, etc) to get there?
8. Have you been able to rely on your food cart business to meet your financial needs? Did you ever need additional jobs to support yourself and your family?

##### EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

**Translation services:** Some of the food cart owners do not speak English proficiently, and we want to make sure we are including them in our focus groups. We plan to ask BPS for support around translation, or rely on peer translators.

**Language:** Due to primary language differences, it is possible that some information could be misinterpreted. We plan to send over drafts of our work if we quote participants or describe their experience. We want to make sure we are capturing it as they desire.

**Location:** Ideally we will meet them where they are already gathering (when Keith gathers them all for his announcements). If that doesn't work out, we will



### 3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

likely provide an online option and an in-person option to give them a choice to meet us in a way that works for them.

**Consent:** We will make it clear that they can answer or not answer any of the questions.

**Compensation:** TBD. Lora has asked others at BPS about this. Confidentiality agreement?

#### KEY DATES AND TIMELINE

Have Keith send introductory email by March 15th notifying the cart owners about our project and that we will be holding groups at the end of the month (maybe send Google survey through this email too?) Planning to conduct the groups between March 29th and April 9th

#### KEY CONTACTS

Spreadsheet of food cart owners from Keith

### INTERVIEWS WITH FOOD CART OWNERS

#### PURPOSE:

To have a more detailed, in depth conversation with several food cart owners building upon the focus group conversations. To understand the experiences of a wide variety of races, ages, cuisines, languages, etc. Whereas the focus groups were more centered around finding patterns, the interviews will be more useful for diving into the differences through learning more about each person's specific experience operating a food cart

#### POTENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. Can you tell the brief story of your business?
2. What inspired you to start it, how long it's been in operation, and where it stands now?
3. What was the experience of being in the Alder Street Pod like?
4. Were you satisfied with the customer flow? Did you enjoy being surrounded by other carts?
5. What was the experience of leaving Alder Street like?
6. Did you have plans for what to do next?
7. Did you have any help with the transition?
8. Do you feel like you have a choice with what happens next with your business? Why or why not?

9. If yes, what are the constraints you have in order to get there?
10. Since 2018, has your business been impacted in new ways? Through COVID, or protests, or anything else?

Keith is curious about finances: how many people they employ, how much money they bring home, etc. Important for knowing the economic impact of food carts.

#### EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Same as the considerations for focus groups. With the 1:1 interviews it will be important to build a little bit of rapport before diving right in. Maybe reference how we remember them from the focus groups and are excited to talk to them more because of x, y, z. Emphasize that they can skip any questions they want

#### KEY DATES AND TIMELINE

Between April 12 and 16 (or the week before if we don't end up doing 1:1 interviews, or if we want to split the group in ½ to do them simultaneously)

#### KEY CONTACTS

Spreadsheet of food cart owners from Keith

### INTERVIEWS WITH CITY BUREAUS

#### PURPOSE:

To learn more about what has been done around relocating food carts in the face of development, and what challenges the city faces toward providing more support. We will also need to know more about permitting of food carts and how these processes have evolved over time to make opening food carts more easier. Lastly, we will want to know the city's visions for the future, and how more food carts can help enhance that.

#### POTENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What role do you think food carts serve in the city?
2. What needs do they meet that differ from brick and mortar restaurants?
3. What resources does the city provide to help sustain food carts? What are the barriers/ roadblocks from your bureau's perspective to opening/sustaining food carts?
4. Has the process toward opening a food cart changed over time? How?
5. How does your bureau intersect with food carts currently? Are there ways you might be able to weave food carts into public space that you manage?

### 3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

6. What are the longer term visions your agency has for the city?
7. How do you see maintaining the food cart culture in Portland to fit in with these visions?

#### EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

We will want to ensure that the interests and concerns discovered during the food cart owner focus groups inform our questions for city bureau interviews.

#### KEY DATES AND TIMELINE

April 16-23

#### Key Contacts

Lora's contacts

#### INTERVIEWS WITH ORGANIZATIONS (OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

##### PURPOSE:

To explore other perspectives and information sources that do not fit into the categories of food cart owners or city bureaus, thus ensuring a holistic understanding of food cart procedures and hurdles as they currently exist in Portland.

##### POTENTIAL QUESTIONS:

###### Questions for City Center Parking:

1. How was your relationship with the food cart owners?
2. Do you have any key lessons learned about having food carts operating on private property?
3. How was the transition after selling the property?

###### Questions for other food cart pods:

1. How is your relationship with the food cart owners on your property?
2. Are there any resources or policies that would make leasing out space to food carts easier or more beneficial?

###### Questions for food cart association:

1. What purpose do you serve/ what services or resources are you able to offer to members of your association?
2. Are there common issues or grievances you have heard from food cart owners?
3. How prescient of an issue is displacement to private development?
4. How has your organization and its members been impacted by COVID?

#### KEY DATES AND TIMELINE

These interviews are less dependent on focus group results, so we can begin reaching out to schedule ASAP, ideally March 9-19 so we can have April for the other interviews.

#### KEY CONTACTS

City Center Parking - On our own  
Other food cart pods - We can reach out to Asylum  
Food cart association - Keith will reach out  
Hacienda - We'll reach out  
Travel Portland - Keith will reach out

#### EMAIL TEMPLATE FOR ORGANIZATIONS:

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_ and I am a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning student at Portland State. I am currently working on a project related to improving the planning and support available for food carts in the central city. We have selected a couple of organizations that we thought would have important insight in mobilizing and supporting food cart owners in Portland, and you were one of them! Would you be willing to answer some questions in a Zoom call sometime between now and March 19th? It wouldn't take more than 30-45 minutes, and would be integral for incorporating multiple perspectives into our project. Thank you for considering!

Sincerely,

---

## 4. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

### EVERGREEN COMMUNITY PLANNING (PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY) MASTERS OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING WORKSHOP PROJECT

Name:  
Role:  
Organization:  
Contact Information:  
Interview Date:

#### **Purpose:**

#### **Interview Questions:**

*Can you tell us a bit about how your work/life intersects with food carts?*

*What role do you think food carts play in the Portland central city? Are there challenges or opportunities unique to operating downtown?*

*What do you imagine for the future of food carts and food cart planning? Will private lots continue to serve as the primary home for food carts?*

*What do you understand to be some of the barriers toward increasing food carts in public spaces in Portland?*

*What would be your concerns to having Food Carts in city parks and/or the right-of-way?*

*What role do you think city bureaus have in supporting and advocating for the future of food carts?*

*Do you have any other insight to share that would be helpful in creating policy recommendations that center around food cart operators?*

## 5. FOOD CART OWNER INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

### FOOD CART OWNER INTERVIEW GUIDE

When starting the interview...

Introduce yourselves and your roles during the interview

Explain the project again:

*"We are part of a group of students at Portland State in the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning program, and we are working on our final project for the program. We have partnered with Keith from Friends of Green Loop as well as the City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to produce a report on the status of food carts within the city. We are particularly focused on food carts within downtown, and are conducting interviews with city officials, community leaders, and food cart owners to better understand the resources available and challenges related to running a food cart successfully. We really appreciate your participation, and it will help us to create a report with recommendations that center food cart owners thoughts and concerns."*

Ask if they have any questions about the project

Confidentiality

*"Are you comfortable with our group naming and/or quoting you within the report? If you prefer to keep your answers confidential, we will not name you or quote you, or we can quote you anonymously."*

*"Are you comfortable with us recording this conversation so that we can share it with our group members not on the call and to make sure we capture everything accurately?"*

Gift cards

*"We are able to offer you compensation for your time in the form of a \$20 gift card to Fred Meyer. Would you prefer an electronic gift card that we can email to you, or a physical gift card that we can mail to you?"*

Confirm the email address or ask for a mailing address depending on the answer.

Questions

*Can you tell us the brief story of your food cart business? (What inspired you to start it, how long has it been in operation? What were/are your goals?)*

*Are you currently operating? If so, where? What is your experience there? (I.e. customer flow, relationships with other business owners)*

*Were there challenges you faced in opening your cart? (I.e. obtaining the cart, permits, finding space, setting up the kitchen, budgeting)*

*Were there challenges you faced while operating and maintaining your cart? (I.e. assistance from others, operating costs, displacement, policies)*

*Have there been any public or community resources that have been helpful for you? (I.e. small business loans, community members, organizations, trainings, etc)*

*Is there any food cart assistance or resources from the City or community that you would want to see more of? (I.e. more access to classes, trainings, loans, groups, unions, etc)*

*How has your cart been uniquely impacted the past year? (Due to COVID, protests, changing downtown, etc).*

*Keith is also interested in any financial information you're comfortable sharing (if you've been able to hire additional employees, been able to fully support yourself, had to get another job, how much money is brought home, etc).*

*Reiterate goals of the interview (to understand the challenges and opportunities that food cart owners commonly find in operating their business) and ask if they have anything else to add related to our goals.*

Closing

THANK THEM!

Remind them that this will be very helpful in creating our recommendations to the City, and let them know that if they are quoted we will send them the quotes before publishing them in the report.

Let them know we will send them the gift card in the way they preferred.



## 6. PUBLIC AGENCY INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

### EVERGREEN COMMUNITY PLANNING (PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY) MASTERS OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING WORKSHOP PROJECT

#### PURPOSE

To learn more about what has been done around relocating food carts in the face of development and what challenges the city faces toward providing more support. We will also need to know more about permitting food carts and how these processes have evolved to make opening food carts easier. Lastly, we will want to see the city's visions for the future and how more food carts can help enhance that.

#### QUESTIONS

*What role do you think food carts serve in the city? What needs do they meet that differ from brick and mortar restaurants?*

*What resources does the city provide to help sustain food carts? What are the barriers/ roadblocks from your bureau's perspective to opening/sustaining food carts?*

*Has the process toward opening a food cart changed over time? How?*

*How does your bureau intersect with food carts currently? Are there ways you might be able to weave food carts into public spaces that you manage?*

*What are the longer-term visions your agency has for the city?*

*How do you see maintaining the food cart culture in Portland to fit in with these visions?*

*Do you think pods should be considered site improvements? If it fell under the designation of development, how would that change the approach and timeline of opening a food cart pod?*

*What are your primary concerns with food carts operating in park spaces?*

*How are the Pioneer Square food carts managed?*

*Would specific park designations for spaces with utility connections be possible over a sweeping inclusion of carts in all Portland parks?*

## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

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### 2021 Portland State University Mobile Food Unit Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Responses to this survey will help us make recommendations that better serve the interests of mobile food unit vendors and business owners to city leaders and community organizations. Mobile food units are a vital component of local economies, they can help communities come out of challenging economic times. We believe that mobile food units will play a vital role in economic recovery efforts post pandemic in many communities across the country. This survey will be open until May 10, 2021. Please complete the survey as soon as you can.

The group conducting this project is made up of six graduate students in Portland State University's Master of Urban and Regional Planning program. We are working with Friends of Green Loop and the City of Portland to better understand the challenges mobile food unit vendors are currently facing. Your responses are anonymous.

While our final project deliverable will focus on the role food carts can play in the economic recovery of Portland, OR, we hope to understand what challenges are unique to different areas of the state. Our final project will be published online during Summer 2021 [here](#).

The survey is divided into the following sections:

1. Unit Details
2. COVID-19 Impacts
3. Future Plans
4. Additional Thoughts
5. Demographics

Participants can also choose to enter a raffle for a \$20 Fred Meyer gift card. Entry will be at the end of the survey.

---

End of Block: Intro

---

Start of Block: Mobile Food Unit Details

### Mobile Food Unit Details

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1 What type of mobile food unit(s) do you operate (ex: Cart, Truck, Van, etc.)? (Multiple responses accepted)

- ☐ Cart (4)
- ☐ Truck (5)
- ☐ Van (6)
- ☐ Stand (8)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (7)
- 

---

2 How many mobile food unit(s) do you own?

- ☐ 1 (4)
- ☐ 2 (5)
- ☐ 3 (6)
- ☐ 4 (7)
- ☐ More than 5 (8)
-

## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

3 Please list the primary zip code(s) in which your mobile food unit(s) operates. (where do you usually operate, multiple responses accepted)

---

4 How long has your business been in operation?

- ☐ Less than 1 year (1)
- ☐ 1 to 4 years (2)
- ☐ 4 to 6 years (3)
- ☐ 6 to 10 years (4)
- ☐ More than 10 years (5)

5 How did you fund the start of your business?

- ☐ Private Loan (1)
- ☐ Personal Savings (2)
- ☐ Grant (3)
- ☐ Loan from Family/Friend (4)

6 How many employees(part time or full time) do you have (not including yourself)?

- ☐ None (1)
- ☐ less than 3 (2)
- ☐ 3 to 6 (3)
- ☐ More than 6 (4)

7 Do you employ family members?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

8 Is your mobile foods unit(s) your primary source of income (either for yourself or household)?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

8 How satisfied are you with your operating location?

- ☐ Extremely satisfied (9)
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied (10)
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (11)
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied (12)
- ☐ Extremely dissatisfied (13)

9 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were you the beneficiary of any programs (local, state, federal, private) that were specifically targeted for mobile food unit owners? (Example: Small Business Administration (SBA) loans or similar)

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

10 If you were the beneficiary of any programs (Example: Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, SBA loans), how easy was it to find those programs?

- ☐ Extremely easy (1)
  - ☐ Somewhat easy (2)
  - ☐ Neither easy nor difficult (3)
  - ☐ Somewhat difficult (4)
  - ☐ Extremely difficult (5)
  - ☐ I'm not sure (6)
- 

11 What (if any) challenges do you face in accessing potential programs that would benefit your business? (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Knowledge of these programs (where to look, who offers them, etc.) (1)
  - ☐ Language Barriers (2)
  - ☐ Access (Mobility, Transportation, Internet Access, etc.) (3)
  - ☐ I do not have enough free time to research programs that might benefit my business (4)
  - ☐ Other (please specify): (5) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ None (6)
- 

12 Generally, what is your primary challenge in operating your mobile food unit?

- ☐ Safety (vandalism, crime, etc.) (1)
  - ☐ Lack of foot traffic in my current location (2)
  - ☐ Regulations (3)
  - ☐ Meeting my operating costs (4)
  - ☐ Lack of facilities (i.e. sitting or restrooms) (6)
  - ☐ Other (please specify) (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

13

Would you participate in or join an organization that provided regular updates on benefits (local, state, federal, private) that would provide support to your business? (For example, an organization that hosts regular meet ups with mobile food unit vendors and other business owners and leaders in your community, an email listserv or mailing list that provides opportunities for financial assistance programs and where to find them, business management training, etc.)

- ☐ Yes (1)
  - ☐ No (2)
  - ☐ Maybe (3)
- 

14 Do you own your space or lease your space?

- ☐ Month to Month lease (1)
  - ☐ Long Term lease (at least a year) (2)
  - ☐ I Own My Space (4)
-



## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

15 Do you have an additional source of income?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

16 Do you offer delivery or catering services?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

17 Do you have access to a commercial kitchen (ex: large kitchen facility in a restaurant, cafeteria, or other facility)

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

End of Block: Mobile Food Unit Details

Start of Block: COVID-19 Impacts

COVID-19 Impacts

18 What level of revenue loss or gain did you experience in 2020 compared to 2019?

- ☐ Significant Loss (1)
- ☐ Minor Loss (2)
- ☐ Neutral/Net Even (3)
- ☐ Minor Revenue Gain (4)
- ☐ Significant Revenue Gain (5)

Display This Question:

If What level of revenue loss or gain did you experience in 2020 compared to 2019? = Significant Loss

Or What level of revenue loss or gain did you experience in 2020 compared to 2019? = Minor Loss

19 What was the estimated amount of your revenue loss in 2020 from 2019 in dollars (\$)?

- ☐ Less Than \$15,000 (6)
- ☐ \$15,000 - \$30,000 (7)
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$60,000 (8)
- ☐ \$60,000 - \$90,000 (9)
- ☐ \$90,000 - \$120,000 (10)
- ☐ Over \$120,000 (11)

Display This Question:

If What level of revenue loss or gain did you experience in 2020 compared to 2019? = Minor Revenue Gain

Or What level of revenue loss or gain did you experience in 2020 compared to 2019? = Significant Revenue Gain

## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

20 What was the estimated amount of your revenue gain in 2020 from 2019 in dollars (\$) ?

- ☐ Less Than \$15,000 (4)
- ☐ \$15,000 - \$30,000 (5)
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$60,000 (6)
- ☐ \$60,000 - \$90,000 (7)
- ☐ \$90,000 - \$120,000 (8)
- ☐ Over \$120,000 (9)

21 Did you receive any local, state, or federal funds from COVID-19 related assistance programs in 2020?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

22 At any time in 2020 did you have to shut down operations due to COVID-19?

- ☐ I did not have to shut down operations (1)
- ☐ Less than 1 month (2)
- ☐ 1-3 months (3)
- ☐ 4-6 months (4)
- ☐ Over 6 months (5)
- ☐ I am currently still shut down but plan to reopen as soon as I can (6)
- ☐ I had to permanently shut down (7)

Display This Question:

If At any time in 2020 did you have to shut down operations due to COVID-19? = I had to permanently shut down

23 Do you plan to re-open your business in the next year?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Maybe (3)

24 Did you have to lay off any (full or part time) employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Did you have to lay off any (full or part time) employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? = Yes

25 How many employees (full or part time) did you have to lay off?

- ☐ 1 (1)
- ☐ 2 (2)
- ☐ 3 (3)
- ☐ 4 (4)
- ☐ More than 5 (5)

## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

26 What kind of support services would help fight the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on your business? (select all that apply):

- ☐ Additional loan programs (1)
- ☐ Marketing assistance (increasing social media presence) (2)
- ☐ Networking Opportunities (with other vendors, community leaders) (3)
- ☐ Design Assistance (website, menus, marketing materials) (4)
- ☐ Business Management Training Programs (5)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (6)  
\_\_\_\_\_

27 Please provide detail on challenges you have faced since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:  
\_\_\_\_\_

End of Block: COVID-19 Impacts

Start of Block: Future Plans

**Future Plans**

28 Do you have plans to transition your mobile food unit to a brick-and-mortar location (restaurant space in a building) in the next 2 to 3 years?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

29 Do you plan to operate additional mobile food units in the next 2 to 3 years?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

End of Block: Future Plans

Start of Block: Additional Thoughts

## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

### Additional Thoughts

30 Please provide detail on any other challenges that you would like us to know about:

31 What kind of support would help your business thrive?

End of Block: Additional Thoughts

Start of Block: Demographics

### Demographics

This section is optional. Your responses to these questions will help us better understand who we are reaching in this survey and inform future engagement methods..

32 Please identify your race/ethnicity (select all that apply).

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native—For example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community (1)

☐ Asian—For example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese (2)

☐ Black or African American—For example, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somalia (3)

☐ Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin—For example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Columbia (4)

☐ Middle Eastern or North African—For example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian (5)

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander—For example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese (6)

☐ White—For example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French (7)

☐ Other (please specify): (8)

☐ I Prefer Not to Say (9)



## 7. SURVEY TEMPLATE

33 How do you currently describe your gender identity?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Transgender (3)
- ☐ Non-binary/non-conforming (4)
- ☐ Prefer not to say (5)

End of Block: Demographics

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Start of Block: Raffle

### Raffle

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34 Would you like to be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a \$20 Fred Meyer gift card?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Would you like to be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a \$20 Fred Meyer gift card? = Yes

35 Please enter your email address to be entered in the raffle. We will only use the email address for raffle purposes.

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End of Block: Raffle

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## **8.FRIENDS OF GREEN LOOP: ANKENY WEST PRESS RELEASE**

**FRIENDS OF GREEN LOOP: ANKENY WEST PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Friends of Green Loop Announces Partnership and Proposal with Portland City Council for Relocation of Alder St. Food Carts**

***Proposal allocates \$269K to support the food cart relocation to the new site on SW 8th, Ankeny and SW Park***

**Portland, Ore. (April 30, 2021)** - Mayor Ted Wheeler, in partnership with Friends of Green Loop, announced Thursday the Alder St. Food Cart pod has been included in the budget allocation proposal for their relocation in downtown Portland. The proposal allocates \$269,000 to support the food cart relocation, which will cover improvements and electricity to the new site on SW 8th, Ankeny and SW Park. The Portland City Council will vote to approve the budget in June and funds would be allocated in July.

"This is an extremely exciting time and has been nearly two years in the making," said Keith Jones, Executive Director for Friends of the Green Loop. "The combination of being displaced and the economic impact of the pandemic has been a one-two punch not only to our food carts but also our independent restaurant scene. This is about getting people back to work and rebuilding our culinary scene."

This is a true collaboration at its core with public and private sectors working together to bring the food carts back to downtown.

"This is a win-win on many levels. This private-public partnership supports businesses owned by members of the Black, Indigenous and people of color community, creating safe outdoor dining opportunities amid the pandemic, all while bringing people downtown again," said Mayor Wheeler. "Food cart pods are dining hubs for our city, and we want to bring back the unique Portland experience we all enjoy. This partnership supports our community, reinvigorates the park space and contributes to the livability of our city."

Friends of Green Loop, an initiative to create a six-mile linear park throughout the city, is leading the private-public coalition along with support from Mayor Ted Wheeler's office, Commissioner

Jo Ann Hardesty, Commissioner Mingus Mapps, Commissioner Carmen Rubio, Commissioner Dan Ryan, Prosper Portland, Portland Parks & Recreation, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Portland Parks Foundation, Travel Portland and the Portland Business Alliance.

“I’m thrilled to see these food carts have a potential new home and with all the work PBOT did to help get us there. Since becoming the Transportation Commissioner, one of my highest priorities has been utilizing public space in ways that promote community, culture, and sustainability. I appreciate all the partnerships that made this possible,” said Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty

“This project is radical placemaking at its best. This summer the Ankeny West pod will be putting food cart owners back in business and transforming a blighted lot,” said Commissioner Mingus Mapps. “I’m grateful to Friends of Green Loop for bringing this creative plan forward,”

“Food carts are a highlight of Portland’s culinary scene, I am happy to support the food cart owners in finding a new location for them to operate,” said Commissioner Carmen Rubio. “The food carts will also bring positive activation to Ankeny West and the North Park Blocks and I look forward to dining there myself.”

In 2019, 55 Alder Street food carts were moved from SW 9th and SW Alder for the development of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. The carts have since been stored at the former US Post Office site in northwest Portland. The new location, which hopes to open in time for the 4th of July weekend, will serve as a new home for the displaced carts, many of which are immigrant based and BIPOC owned businesses.

The proposed [Culinary Corridor](#), which is planned for SW 9th Ave. between Director Park and O’Bryant Park and SW Park from O’Bryant Park to Burnside, would be one segment of the city’s Green Loop. It would borrow the festival street concept, where a portion of public right-of-way has been designated for the purpose of pedestrian-oriented activities, and food carts would occupy the curbside parking spaces. The Green Loop is a long-term plan to deal with the shrinking number of surface parking lots due to rising land value, spanning throughout downtown, as well as Lloyd and Central East Side.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.pdxgreenloop.org/the-culinary-corridor/>

For renderings of Ankeny West, please see this [link](#).

### **About Friends of the Green Loop**

Friends of Green Loop is a community-based organization that promotes, advocates and helps to advance the development of the Green Loop. The organization was originally founded by Kiel Johnson, a dedicated bike advocate, community leader and owner of Go By Bike, the largest bike valet in the country. Together with friend Keith Jones, the organization quickly grew to gain larger participation in the design and development of the Green Loop. Quickly gaining supporters in the community, Friends of Green Loop is making steps to grow from promotion and advocacy to include design, development, programming and management.

###



## 9. EXTENDED SOURCES + ENDNOTES

### CASE STUDIES - FOOD TRUCK NATION INDEX RANKINGS

CITY	OVERALL RANK	OBTAINING PERMITS & LICENSES	COMPLYING WITH RESTRICTIONS	OPERATING A FOOD TRUCK
PORTLAND, OR	1	8	3	1
DENVER, CO	2	1	2	6
ORLANDO, FL	3	5	4	4
PHILADELPHIA, PA	4	3	1	13
INDIANAPOLIS, IN	5	2	13	3
HOUSTON, TX	6	9	6	7
AUSTIN, TX	7	6	10	12
LOS ANGELES, CA	8	13	8	10
NEW YORK, NY	9	14	5	15
NASHVILLE, TN	10	12	12	11
RALEIGH, NC	11	10	14	8
ST. LOUIS, MO	12	11	11	16
CHICAGO, IL	13	15	9	17
PHOENIX, AZ	14	7	19	2
COLUMBUS, OH	15	16	16	5
MINNEAPOLIS, MN	16	18	15	9
SEATTLE, WA	17	4	20	14
SAN FRANCISCO, CA	18	17	18	18
WASHINGTON, D.C.	19	19	17	19
BOSTON, MA	20	20	7	20

## 9. EXTENDED SOURCES + ENDNOTES

### Seattle

- Gov Source: <http://www.seattle.gov/office-of-economic-development/small-business/food-businesses/mobile-food-businesses#:~:text=A%20permit%20or%20exemption%20must,at%20least%20100%20degrees%20Fahrenheit>.
- Checklist: [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/economic-Development/restaurants/Mobile\\_Food\\_Vending\\_Checklist%20updated%20Parks%20info\(0\).pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/economic-Development/restaurants/Mobile_Food_Vending_Checklist%20updated%20Parks%20info(0).pdf)
- DOT Permitting for in the ROW: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services/permits/vending-permits>
- SDOT: How to estimate and Pay Permit fees: [https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services/permits/how-to-estimate-and-pay-fees#PS\\_Vend](https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services/permits/how-to-estimate-and-pay-fees#PS_Vend)
- SGOV: Vending Permits: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services/permits/vending-permits>
- Vending in the Public ROW: [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/Vending\\_PublicROW\\_Flyer.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/Vending_PublicROW_Flyer.pdf)
- City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections 2021 Fee Subtitle <http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDCI/Codes/FeeSubtitleFinal.pdf>

### Boston

- Business Certificate Checklist: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/city-clerk/how-apply-business-certificate>
- Health and Fire permit for your food truck: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/small-business-development/how-get-health-and-fire-permit-your-food-truck>
- Hawker/Peddler License: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/small-business-development/how-get-hawker-and-peddler-license>
- Food truck sites: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/small-business-development/food-truck-sites>

### New York

- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/rii/rules-regs-mfv.pdf>
- What mobile food vendors should know: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/rii/regulations-for-mobile-food-vendors.pdf>
- Food Cart vendor license: <https://portal.311.nyc.gov/article/?kanumber=KA-03354>
- NY Times article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/29/nyregion/street-vendors-permits-nyc.html>

### Denver

- Food Truck Guide: <https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/747/documents/permits/food-truck-guide.pdf>
- Denver Gov page: <https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Departments/Business-Licensing/Business-Licenses/Retail-Food-Mobile-Licenses>
- Provision of commissary list: [https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/business-licensing/documents/commissary\\_list.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/business-licensing/documents/commissary_list.pdf)
- Retail mobile food license: [https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/business-licensing/documents/retail\\_food\\_mobile\\_licensing\\_instructions.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/business-licensing/documents/retail_food_mobile_licensing_instructions.pdf)
- Food Truck build guide: [https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/business-licensing/documents/food\\_truck\\_guide.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/business-licensing/documents/food_truck_guide.pdf)

## **9. EXTENDED SOURCES + ENDNOTES**

### **END NOTES**

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## 9. EXTENDED SOURCES + ENDNOTES

### PROJECT OVERVIEW ENDNOTES

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- 5 Anderson, Jen (2019). Food Carts 101. Accessed February 20, 2021. Travel Oregon (2021). [https:// traveloregon.com/things-to-do/eat-drink/restaurants/food-carts-101/](https://traveloregon.com/things-to-do/eat-drink/restaurants/food-carts-101/)
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- 17 City Government Structure: Portland (2021). <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/article/9178>

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- 45 Oregon City Planning Department, "Mobile Food Units," <https://www.orcity.org/planning/mobile-food-units>
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